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THE LIGHT THAT SHINES IN DARKNESS



Illustrated Cabinet Edition

**THE LIGHT THAT SHINES IN
THE DARKNESS
THE MAN WHO WAS DEAD
THE CAUSE OF IT ALL**

By
Lev N. Tolstoy

Edited By
Dr. Hagberg Wright



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PREFACE

TOLSTOY AS DRAMATIST

IN almost every kind of literary work he touched, Tolstoy succeeded at once in reaching the foremost rank.

When he sent his first story, *Childhood*, anonymously to the poet Nekrásov, editor of *The Contemporary* (then the leading Petersburg magazine), the latter promptly accepted and published it; Dostoyévsky was so struck by it that he wrote from Siberia to inquire who its talented author was; Turgénev sang its praises, and Panáev was so delighted with it that his friends, it was said, had to avoid him on the Névsky lest he should insist on reading them extracts from it.

When Tolstoy turned from stories to novels he achieved the same immediate and complete success. The appearance of the first instalment of *War and Peace* sufficed to place him abreast of the world's greatest writers of fiction.

Fourteen years later he turned to spiritual auto-

biography, and his *Confession* immediately took rank beside those of St. Augustine and Rousseau.

When he propounded his interpretation of Christ's teaching, his works produced a profound impression and, though they were prohibited in Russia, found a large circulation abroad besides a surreptitious one at home.

Next he took to writing short, simple stories for the people, and the very first of these, *What Men Live By* (v. *Twenty-three Tales*), circulated by hundreds of thousands of copies in Russia, was translated into all civilised languages, and delighted people, old and young, in the five continents.

When he turned his attention to social problems, and wrote *What Then Must We Do?* the book aroused the deepest interest wherever it was read, and was promptly recognised as one of the most remarkable studies of poverty ever penned.

He took to essays, and at once produced a series which many readers have declared to be as interesting and stimulating as any that were ever written.

Interested in the philosophy of art, he wrote *What is Art?* His preparation for this attempt

to put art on a new basis took him, it is true, fifteen years, and a majority of critics everywhere denounced the opinions he expressed; but, at any rate, there was no doubt about the general interest he aroused, and the longer the matter is discussed, the stronger grows the suspicion that on the main point of the discussion Tolstoy saw deeper than his critics, and that, great artist as he was, his philosophy of art as well as his practice of it was fundamentally sound.

Finally his philippics, such as his *Reply to the Synod*, which had excommunicated him (v. *Essays and Letters*), and his denunciation of the Court-martial in *I Cannot be Silent!* rang out with a sincerity, courage, and effectiveness unparalleled since Pascal's *Provincial Letters*, or the famous theses Luther nailed to the church door at Wittenberg.

Only as a dramatist did Tolstoy fail at his first attempt; and even in that direction success came so promptly that it is his success rather than his failure that surprises one.

As a seventeen-year-old student at Kazán University, he had taken part with much success in two plays given for some charity at Carnival time; and his taste for theatricals did not soon pass,

for in later years, when writing of the time after his return from the defence of Sevastopol, and telling of the death of his brother Demetrius, he adds: "I really believe that what hurt me most was that his death prevented my taking part in some private theatricals then being got up at Court and to which I had been invited."

While living in Petersburg and Moscow as a young man, Tolstoy was enthusiastic in his admiration of one of the great Russian actors of those days; but he never lived much in cities, and probably no other great dramatist ever spent so little time in the theatre as he did. In that, as in many other lines of work, his quickness of perception, tenacity of memory and vividness of emotion enabled him to dispense with the long training men of less genius require.

In 1863, soon after his marriage, he wrote two plays which were never published. One, a farcical comedy called *The Nihilist*, was privately performed with much success. The other, also a comedy, called *The Infected Family*, he intended for public performance. With that end in view, Tolstoy took it to Moscow early in 1864. The theatrical season (which in Russia ends at the be-

ginning of Lent) was then, however, too far advanced for any manager to stage the piece that winter; and, as it dealt with a topic of the day which lost some of its freshness by keeping, Tolstoy never afterwards offered it to any one.

That was the one and only rebuff he ever had to face in his literary career, if one excepts the amusing incident of his sending a short prose poem anonymously to a Moscow newspaper, and receiving it back declined with thanks, on the ground that its author was "not yet sufficiently expert in expression!" For the next six years he seems not to have taken any interest in the drama; but in 1870 we find him writing to Fet:—

"There is much, very much, I want to tell you about. I have been reading a lot of Shakespear, Goethe, Púshkin, Gógol and Molière, and about all of them there is much I want to say to you."

A few days later he again wrote to the same friend:—

"You want to read me a story of cavalry life . . . And I don't want to read you anything, because I am not writing anything; but I very much want to talk about Shakespear and Goethe, and the drama in general. This whole

winter I am occupied only with the drama; and it happens to me, as usually happens to people who, till they are forty, have not thought of a certain subject, or formed any conception of it; and then suddenly, with forty-year-old clearness, turn their attention to this new, untasted subject — it seems to them that they discern in it much that is new. All winter I have enjoyed myself lying down, drowsing, playing *bézique*, snow-shoeing, skating, and most of all lying in bed (ill) while characters from a drama or comedy have performed for me. And they perform very well. It is about that I want to talk to you. In that, as in everything, you are a classic and understand the essence of the matter very deeply. I should like also to read Sophocles and Euripides.”

The mood passed, and for another fifteen years one hears no more about it: Tolstoy being absorbed first in the production of an *ABC Book* for school-children, then with *Anna Karénina*, then with his *Confession* and religious studies, as well as with field-work, hut-building, and boot-making.

Early in 1886, noting the wretched character of the plays given in the booths at the Carnival

Shows on the Maidens' Field just outside Moscow, not far from his own house, and feeling how wrong it was that the dramatic food of the people should consist of the crudest melodramas, he was moved to turn into a play a small Temperance story he had written. This piece, called *The First Distiller*, is of no great importance in itself, but was the precursor of the splendid dramas he soon afterwards produced.

The following summer, while out ploughing, he hurts his leg, neglects it, and gets erysipelas, which almost leads to blood-poisoning. His life is in imminent danger, he has to undergo a painful operation, is laid up for weeks, and while ill writes most of *The Power of Darkness*, an immensely powerful play which serves as a touchstone for those who have the Tolstoy feeling in them.

From the poisoning of Peter, the husband, in the beginning, to the murder of the baby in the middle, and Nikita's arrest at the end, the piece is full of horrors which most people, who do not look at things from Tolstoy's point of view, find it wellnigh impossible to endure. To them the play appears to be one of unmitigated blackness. To Tolstoyans it is not so. The lies, the crimes,

the horrors are there, as in real life; but in the play one sees more clearly than in common life the clue to the meaning of it all. When Nikíta's conscience begins to be touched; when Mítritch, the old soldier, teaches him not to be afraid of men; and finally when Akím, the old father, rejoices that his son has confessed, the heavens open and the purpose of life — the preparing for what is yet to come by getting things straight here and now — is revealed; and the effect of the play, instead of being sordid or painful, becomes inspiring.

The play was founded on fact, though what happened in real life was even more gruesome, for in actual fact Nikíta's prototype, when on the point of driving off to Akulína's wedding, suddenly seized a large wooden wedge and aimed a tremendous blow at her younger sister; and he did this not out of malice, but because he felt so sure that it is a misfortune to be alive in a world where things have gone so wrong as they have done in the world we live in. Fortunately his blow, which seemed certain to kill the girl, glanced aside, and merely stunned her without doing her any permanent injury.

The Power of Darkness was prohibited by the Dramatic Censor, and throughout the reign of Alexander III. its public performance in Russia was forbidden.

It was produced for the first time at the Théâtre Libre in Paris, in February 1888. Among its most enthusiastic admirers was Zola, who was as anxious about it as he could have been had it been his own work. "Above all, do not strike out a single scene or a single word, and do not fear for its success," said he at one of the rehearsals; and he was quite right. The piece had a tremendous success, and was played at one and the same time at three different Paris theatres, as well as at the Freie Buhnen in Berlin, where it had a similar triumph. After the accession of Nicholas II. it was acted in Russia, and took rank at once as one of the greatest masterpieces of Russian dramatic art, and as such holds a place in the repertory of the best Moscow and Petersburg theatres.

Many Englishmen who have seen it have been immensely impressed by it. Laurence Irving wrote me: "I suppose England is the only country in Europe where *The Power of Darkness* has not

been acted. It ought to be done. It is a stupendous tragedy; the effect on the stage is unparalleled." Bernard Shaw, writing to Tolstoy, said, "I remember nothing in the whole range of drama that fascinated me more than the old soldier in your *Power of Darkness*. One of the things that struck me in that play was the feeling that the preaching of the old man, right as he was, could never be of any use — that it could only anger his son and rub the last grains of self-respect out of him. But what the pious and good father could not do, the old rascal of a soldier did as if he was the voice of God. To me that scene, where the two drunkards are wallowing in the straw and the older rascal lifts the younger one above his cowardice and his selfishness, has an intensity of effect that no merely romantic scene could possibly attain." Arthur Symonds wrote: "More than any play I have ever seen, this astounding play of Tolstoy's seems to me to fulfil Aristotle's demand upon tragedy: 'Through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions.' I had never read it; my impression was gained directly from seeing it on the stage. Well, though as I listened to it I felt the

pity and fear to be almost insupportable, I left the theatre with a feeling of exultation, as I have left a concert room after hearing a piece of noble and tragic music. How out of such human discords such a divine harmony can be woven I do not know; that is the secret of Tolstoy's genius, as it is the secret of the musician's. Here, achieved in terms of naked horror, I found some of the things that Maeterlinck has aimed at and never quite rendered through an atmosphere and through forms of vague beauty. And I found also another kind of achievement, by the side of which Ibsen's cunning adjustments of reality seemed either trivial or unreal. Here, for once, human life is islanded on the stage, a pin-point of light in an immense darkness; and the sense of that surrounding darkness is conveyed to us as in no other play that I have ever seen, by an awful sincerity and by an unparalleled simplicity. Whether Tolstoy has learnt by instinct some stage-craft which playwrights have been toiling after in vain, or by what conscious and deliberate art he has supplemented instinct, I do not know. But, out of horror and humour, out of the dregs of human life and out of mere faith in those dregs, somehow, as

a man of genius does once in an age, Tolstoy has in this play made for us the great modern play, the great play of the nineteenth century."

That Tolstoy should thus have begun successful play-writing at a time when he was supposed to have turned aside from art, and when he was nearly sixty years of age, was remarkable; but at any rate *The Power of Darkness* was a serious piece, obviously dealing with moral questions which stirred his soul profoundly at the time; and, moreover, he wrote it for the People's Theatre, started to provide first-rate drama for the peasants. It came, therefore, as a yet greater surprise to many people when, three years later, he was persuaded by his daughters to write a comedy for them to perform at home, Yásnaya Polyána.

One knows pretty well how it happened. The taste for play-writing was strong upon him. After more than twelve years devoted to didactic work which gave his sense of humour little or no scope, it was in the nature of things that he should feel some reaction.

At first the play was to have been only a short two-act affair. He did not like to refuse his daughters' request, and thought that if they must

act something, it was better that they should act a play voicing his contempt for the follies and extravagance of society and his consciousness of the peasants' needs. Once started on the work, however, it took hold of him and grew and grew, till it became a full-fledged four-act comedy with over thirty speaking characters in it, and with the didactic purpose overwhelmed by the fun, the bustle, and the stage-craft of it.

After many rehearsals this play, *Fruits of Culture*, was performed at Yásnaya Polyána on December 30, 1889, with immense success. Tánya, Tolstoy's eldest daughter, took the part of her namesake in the play very successfully, and Mary, his second daughter, played the cook most admirably.

Tolstoy himself heartily enjoyed the performance. One greatly respects his thirty-year struggle to live a simple life, consuming little and giving much; but one does not love him the less for the occasional lapses into whole-hearted gaiety which light up the record of his life, and show us how very human was this giant. Yásnaya Polyána, on New Year's eve 1889, crammed with guests all in the highest spirits; the large upstairs

room full of spectators laughing till their sides ached at Tolstoy's comedy, is a scene those who would understand Tolstoy should by no means forget or despise. Yet, even then, the other side of his nature, which never let him rest, caused him to note in his Diary: "I am ashamed of all this expense in the midst of poverty."

The whole company threw themselves into the piece with enthusiasm, and acted really well. In particular, V. M. Lopátin, a neighbouring Justice of the Peace, extracted from the part of the Third Peasant so much more than its author had anticipated or even intended, that Tolstoy, in ecstasies, slapped his thighs and laughed till the tears rolled down his cheeks; for he was always extremely susceptible to anything really good, whether in acting or in other forms of art.

I well remember meeting at Yásnaya Polyána, on two different occasions, the sculptor Ginzburg, who was an admirable mimic. He could keep a room full of people entranced while he enacted a Jew tailor stitching clothes, or a nurse tending or neglecting an imaginary baby. None of those present expressed warmer admiration of these performances than did Tolstoy himself, and when he

went for a walk with us afterwards, he said to Ginzburg with great animation :

“ Ah, if our theatre realists could only be got to understand that what is wanted is not to put real babies on the stage or show the real messes they make, but to convey, as you do, by voice and feature the real feeling that has to be expressed ! ”

No blunder made by Tolstoy's critics is more gratuitous or indefensible than the pretence that he was indifferent to the form of art, or demanded of it that it should always have a directly didactic intention.

Not without express purpose did he, in *What is Art?* write, “ Art is a means of union among men, joining them together in the same feelings, and indispensable for the life and progress towards well-being of individuals and of humanity ” ; and he then goes on to say : “ Thanks to man's capacity to be infected with the feelings of others by means of art, all that is being lived through by his contemporaries is accessible to him, as well as the feelings experienced by men thousands of years ago, and he has also the possibility of transmitting his own feelings to others.”

“ If men lacked this capacity of being infected

by art, people would be more separated and hostile to one another, and more savage than wild beasts. Therefore, the activity of art is a most important one — as important as the activity of speech itself, and as generally diffused." And in a memorable passage he adds, "We are accustomed to understand art to be only what we hear and see in theatres, concerts, and exhibitions; together with buildings, statues, poems, novels. . . . But all this is but the smallest part of the art by which we communicate with each other in life. All human life is filled with works of art of every kind — from cradle-song, jest, mimicry, the ornamentation of houses, dress, and utensils, up to church services, buildings, monuments, and triumphal processions. It is all artistic activity."

He insists again and again on the value and prevalence of art, and when speaking of those primitive Christians and others who have wished to repudiate art, he says, "Evidently such people were wrong in repudiating all art, for they denied that which cannot be denied—one of the indispensable means of communication, without which mankind could not exist."

Tolstoy knew very well that a performance

must be excellent in its form and method of expression in order to be a work of art. In the illustration he gives of the performance of music, for instance, he says that for musical execution to be artistic and to transmit feeling, many conditions are necessary, of which the three chief are the pitch, the time, and the strength of the sound, and he adds: "Musical execution is only then art, only then infects, when the sound is neither higher nor lower than it should be — that is, when exactly the infinitely small centre of the required note is taken; when that note is continued exactly as long as needed; and when the strength of the sound is neither more nor less than is required. The slightest deviation of pitch in either direction, the slightest increase or decrease in time, or the slightest strengthening or weakening of the sound beyond what is needed, destroys the perfection and, consequently, the infectiousness of the work. So that the feeling of infection by the art of music, which seems so simple and so easily obtained, is a thing we receive only when the performer finds those infinitely minute degrees which are necessary to perfection in music. It is the same in all arts: a wee bit lighter, a wee bit darker, a wee bit

higher, lower, to the right or the left — in painting; a wee bit weaker or stronger in intonation, or a wee bit sooner or later — in dramatic art; a wee bit omitted, over-emphasised, or exaggerated — in poetry, and there is no contagion. It is only obtained when an artist finds those infinitely minute degrees of which a work of art consists, and only to the extent to which he finds them."

Confronted by words such as these, it is amazing that any one can pretend that Tolstoy was indifferent to quality in the forms of art; but not less amazing is the assertion that only what is directly moralising was considered by him fit subject-matter for art. On this point his words are decisive, when he includes among the subject-matter suitable for good art, "the simplest feelings of common life."

The truth is that, in spite of certain prepossessions which tend to confuse the matter, and in spite of his pugnacious controversial methods, which often led to recrimination rather than to elucidation, Tolstoy's greatness as an artist was increased by the fact that he thoroughly understood the aim and purpose of art; and he was able to speak with authority on the philosophy of art, just because he

was one of the most intellectual and intelligent of the world's artists.

As mentioned in my *Life of Tolstoy*, the main theme in *Fruits of Culture* was drawn from Tolstoy's acquaintance with the Lvóvs, a wealthy and aristocratic family, the head of which wished to convert Tolstoy to spiritualism. The latter sturdily maintained a sceptical attitude, arguing that since mankind has been at the pains to discriminate between *matter* (which can be investigated by the five senses) and *spirit* (which is an affair of the conscience, and cannot be investigated by the senses), we must not again confuse the two by attempting to find physical evidence of spiritual existence. If the phenomena we are investigating is cognisable by the senses, then, he argued, such phenomena are, *ipso facto*, not spiritual, but material. In this, as in certain other matters, Tolstoy, seeking clearness, painted in black and white, and shunned those delicate shades which often elude and perplex us — but without which, after all, it is not always possible to get a true picture.

Fruits of Culture found its way on to the public stage in Russia before *The Power of Darkness*,

and both there and abroad the two plays have been almost equally successful. It is often treated as pure comedy, and the peasants presented as simply comic characters. This Tolstoy did not intend, and did not like. He meant the hardness of their lot and their urgent need of land to stand out in sharp contrast to the waste of wealth by the cultured crowd.

During the last thirty years of his life Tolstoy himself used, as is well known, to dress much like a peasant, though never in the beggar-pilgrim garb in which he is made to figure in a *Life* of him recently published in this country; and it happened that one winter's day, when *Fruits of Culture* was being rehearsed in Túla (the nearest town to Yásnaya Polyána), he went, by request, to the hall where it was being staged. Wearing his rough sheepskin overcoat, he attempted to enter, but was roughly shoved out by the doorkeeper, who told him it was no place for the likes of him!

The same year the play was presented at Tsarskoe Selo, by amateurs drawn from the highest circles of Court society, and was witnessed by a dozen Grand Dukes and Grand-Duchesses as well as by the Tsar himself, who warmly

thanked the performers for the pleasure it had given him. So the whirligig of time brought it about that Tolstoy, who twenty-three years before had just missed his chance of acting at the Imperial Court, now had a play of his own performed there, while he himself was being mistaken for a peasant, and on that account treated with gross indignity.

We have Tolstoy's word for it that he would have written more plays had it not been for the censor. He once said, "I feel certain the censor would not pass my plays. You would not believe how, from the very commencement of my activity, that horrible censor question has tormented me! I wanted to write what I felt; but at the same time it occurred to me that what I wrote would not be permitted, and involuntarily I had to abandon the work. I abandoned, and went on abandoning, and meanwhile the years passed away."

He once expressed surprise that, in *Fruits of Culture*, the drunken man-cook's monologue on the ways of the rich folk was allowed to be performed.

Of the three plays left by Tolstoy for publication after his death, one is a short two-act Temperance play called in English *The Cause of it All*

(the Russian title is a colloquialism difficult to render, but "From it all evil flows" is as near as one can get to it). It does not claim to be a piece of much importance, but if ever it is staged, it should act easily and well.

Another of these posthumous plays is *The Man That Was Dead* (The Live Corpse), a powerful piece, in which Tolstoy introduces one of those gipsy choirs which had such an influence on him (and still more on his brother Sergius) when he was a young man of twenty to twenty-three, before he went to the Caucasus and entered the army.

The position of the gipsy choirs in Russia is a peculiar one. Reputedly Egyptian in origin ("Pharaoh's Tribe," one of the characters in the play calls them), they live a life quite distinct from that of the Russians, yet not at all resembling that of the itinerant gipsies one meets travelling about with caravans in England. They possess a remarkable musical talent, having a kind of music both vocal and instrumental all their own. They perform at special restaurants in the suburbs of Moscow, and also give concerts in public halls and at private houses. It is no more unusual for Russian noblemen to marry gipsy girls

than it is for English noblemen to marry Gaiety girls. The songs referred to in Scene II are all well-known gipsy songs, and if staged with a real gipsy choir to perform them, this should be one of the most striking scenes in the play.

Tolstoy himself held that gipsy music deserved to rank among the best kinds of music, on account of its genuine spontaneity, the depth of feeling in it, and the exquisite perfection with which it is rendered by the gipsies. His own daughters used to play and sing gipsy songs admirably.

The main plot of this play, like that of *The Power of Darkness*, was supplied to Tolstoy by his friend N. V. Davýdov, a Judge and a Lecturer on criminal law at Moscow University, who frequently drew his attention to cases that occurred in the Law Courts, and which Davýdov thought might provide suitable subjects for a story or a drama.

Curiously enough, after Tolstoy had written this play, he was visited first by the stepson of the "live corpse," and then by the "live corpse" himself. The latter had been convicted, had served his time, and had returned to Moscow. He had given up drink and was seeking means of subsist-

ence, when he heard of the play Tolstoy was writing, and that it was founded on his own case. Tolstoy questioned him carefully, and as a result of the conversation rewrote the play in order to set the conduct of the corpse in a more favourable light than before. In this revised version Tolstoy makes him finally commit suicide, whereas in an earlier version the law took its course as it did in real life, and matters only settled down and adjusted themselves after his victims had served their sentences and justice had ceased to meddle.

Tolstoy also gave the "corpse" a letter to Davýdov, who obtained for him some small post at the Law Courts, where he served till his death; no one but his benefactors and his own family knowing who he was. Some time after his death Davýdov told me this about him.

Part of the attraction of the story for Tolstoy lay in the fact that the intervention of the law did no good to any one, but only harm to all concerned; for it was part and parcel of Tolstoy's non-resistant theory that Law Courts and the Administration of justice are purely noxious.

The Man That Was Dead has already been staged at the Artistic Theatre in Moscow, and it

is to be hoped that we shall see it in London; but the last of Tolstoy's plays, *The Light That Shines in Darkness*, was left unfinished, and is hardly likely to be produced, unless by the Stage Society, or some similar organisation. In Russia it is prohibited on account of its allusions to the refusal of military service.

Yet it is in some ways the most interesting of Tolstoy's posthumous works. It is obviously not strictly autobiographical, for Tolstoy was not assassinated as the hero of the piece is, nor was his daughter engaged to be married to a young prince who refused military service. But like some of his other writings, the play is semi-autobiographical. In it, not only has Tolstoy utilised personal experiences, but more than that, he answers the question so often asked: Why, holding his views, did he not free himself from property before he grew old?

Some people, and especially some of those most devoted to Tolstoy's memory, are sure to suppose and to declare that he intends Nicholas Ivanovich Sarintsev to be taken as a faithful portrait of himself. But to understand Tolstoy one has to recognise the duality of his character, which he never

concealed and often mentioned; and the hero of *The Light That Shines in Darkness* has none of this duality. He represents only one side of Tolstoy, and is not at all the sort of man, for instance, who would have written or enjoyed *Fruits of Culture*.

Not only are the facts different to the real ones, and the character of the hero much simpler than Tolstoy's own, but the problem at issue between Sarintsev and his wife is not quite the same as the one at issue between Tolstoy and the Countess. With that unerring artistic tact which Tolstoy never lost, he causes Nicholas Ivanovich Sarintsev to make a definite proposal to retain "fifty acres and the kitchen garden and the flooded meadow," which would "bring in about £50 a year." Now what in real life most frightened the Countess, was not that she was asked to accept poverty, but that she was asked to manage a household in which there should be no limit to the giving up.

Tolstoy held, as he says in *The Demands of Love*, that if people begin giving up and set any limits thereto, then "life will be hell, or will become hell, if they are not hypocrites. . . . Where and how can one stop? Only those will

find a stopping-place who are strangers to the feeling of the reality of the brotherhood of man, or who are so accustomed to lie that they no longer notice the difference between truth and falsehood. The fact is, no such stopping-place can exist. . . . If you give the beggar your last shillings, you will be left without bread to-morrow; but to refuse means to turn from that for the sake of which one lives."

Had that point, and the need of admitting to one's cottage "the tramp with his lice and his typhus," and giving away the children's last cup of milk, been pressed home in the play as it was in Tolstoy's teaching, some of the readers' sympathy would go over to the side of the wife called on to face such conditions for herself and her family; and that is why Tolstoy's artistic instinct induced him to introduce a definite proposal quite at variance with the demands of his own teaching.

And again, the conflict in the play is between the husband on the one side and the wife and family on the other. There is no mention of a friend urging the husband on in opposition to the wife. Those who closely followed Tolstoy's

own fate well know that on this point also the play does not describe his own case.

Not the less on that account does the play most touchingly present to us the intense tragedy of Tolstoy's later years, and the impossibility in which he found himself of acting so as neither to violate his own conscience nor to evoke anger in the hearts of those nearest to him. His religion had brought "not peace, but a sword"; and it was because he believed in it so firmly, and yet shrank from treating those of his own household as his foes, that his struggle was so intense, and that for more than thirty years he hesitated before he decided to leave wife and home, the scenes endeared to him by childhood's memory, and the spot where he hoped to be (and eventually was) buried — the spot where his brother had hidden the green stick on which he said was inscribed the secret of how to banish from the world all sin, bitterness, discord, and evil — all, in short, that makes us sad or sorry.

Plays Tolstoy found more difficult to write than stories or novels; for in the novel or story it is possible to stop and explain, and gradually to pre-

pare an incident or develop a character, whereas in a play the situations and clash of characters and wills have to be presented ripe and ready. Novel-writing he compared to painting, in which many shades may be employed; plays he compared to sculpture, where all must be clear-cut, definite, and compact.

He often remarked that subjects suitable for novels are not suitable for plays and *vice versa*; and he expressed satisfaction that he had never been obliged to witness the dramatised versions of *Resurrection* or of *Anna Karénina* which have been staged. He had nothing at all to do with those productions, and quite disapproved of them.

Of his plays in general Tolstoy once remarked to me: "When writing them I never anticipated the importance that has been attributed to them." While he fully recognised, and perhaps at times overrated, the value of his didactic and propagandist writings, he was often inclined to under-rate the value of the artistic work which during his later years he sometimes undertook more or less as a recreation, and on that account was the more ready to treat lightly. It was mentioned by the Editor in the first volume of these Posthu-

mous Works of Tolstoy's, the translations were chosen by an agent of the executors; and I am responsible only for the novel *Hadjo-Murad* which will appear in the third volume.

AYLMER MAUDE.

**THE LIGHT THAT SHINES IN
DARKNESS**

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

NICHOLAS IVANOVICH SARINTSEV.

MARIE IVANOVNA (MASHA), his wife.

LUBA (LUBOV NICOLAEVNA), } their daughters.
MISSIE,

STEPHEN, } their sons.
VANIA,

MITROFAN DMITRICH. Tutor to Vania.

ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA. Sister to Marie Ivan-
ovna.

PETER SEMENOVICH KOKHOVTSEV. Her husband.

LISA. Their daughter.

PRINCESS CHEREMSHANOV.

BORIS. Her son.

TONIA. Her daughter.

FATHER VASILY (VASILY ERMILOVICH). A vil-
lage priest.

FATHER GERASIM.

ALEXIS MIKHAILOVICH STARKOVSKY.

NURSE and FOOTMEN in Sarintsev's house.

IVAN, }
SEBASTIAN, } Peasants.
EPHRAIM, }
PETER, }

A PEASANT WOMAN. Ivan's wife.

MALASHKA. Ivan's daughter.

ALEXANDER PETROVICH. A tramp.

A country POLICE SERGEANT.

LAWYER.

YAKOV. Carpenter.

CLERK.

SENTRIES.

GENERAL.

COLONEL.

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

SOLDIERS.

POLICE OFFICER.

STENOGRAPHER.

CHAPLAIN.

PATIENTS IN HOSPITAL.

SICK OFFICER.

HEAD PHYSICIAN.

HOUSE SURGEON.

WARDERS.

COUNTESS and other GUESTS at Sarintsev's dance.

PIANIST.

ACT I

The stage represents a covered veranda in a rich country-house. In front of the veranda are a flower garden, a tennis ground, and a croquet lawn. The children with their governess are playing croquet. On the veranda are seated: MARIE IVANOVNA SARINTSEV, a handsome, elegant woman of forty; her sister ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA KOKHOVTSEV, a fat, positive, and stupid woman of forty-five; and her husband, PETER SEMENOVICH KOKHOVTSEV, a fat, stout, clumsy man of slovenly appearance, wearing a summer suit and eye-glasses. They all sit at a table laid for breakfast with samovar and coffee. All are drinking coffee; PETER SEMENOVICH is smoking.

ALEXANDRA.

If you were not my sister, and Nicholas Ivanovich were not your husband, but merely an acquaintance, I should find all this novel and charming, and should perhaps uphold him. I should have found it very nice. But when I see your husband playing the fool, simply playing the fool, I cannot help telling you what I think of it. And I shall tell him too, that husband of yours. I shall speak straight out to dear Nicholas. I am not afraid of anybody.

THE LIGHT THAT

MARIE.

I do not mind in the least: I see it myself. But I really do not think it is as important as all that.

ALEXANDRA.

You may not think so; but I assure you, if you let it go on, you will all be beggared. That is what will come of this sort of thing. . . .

PETER.

Beggared, indeed! With their fortune!

ALEXANDRA.

Yes, beggared. Don't interrupt me. Of course, you always think that anything a man does is right.

PETER.

I don't know. I only say. . . .

ALEXANDRA.

You never know what you are talking about, and when once you men begin your nonsense, there is no knowing where it will end. All I say is, that if I were in your place, I should not allow it. I should have put a stop to all this. I never heard of such a thing. The husband, the head, of the family, does nothing, neglects his affairs, gives everything away, and plays the bountiful

right and left. I know how it will end. I know all about it.

PETER.

(to MARIE IVANOVNA.) Do explain to me, Marie, what this new fad of his is. There are Liberals, County Councils, the Constitution Schools, reading-rooms and all the rest of it — I understand all that. Then there are Socialists, strikes, an eight-hour day — I understand that too. But what is all this? Do explain.

MARIE.

He told you all about it yesterday.

PETER.

I own that I could not understand. The Gospel, the Sermon on the Mount, that churches are unnecessary. But where are we to pray, and all that?

MARIE.

That is the worst of it. He would destroy everything and put nothing in its place.

PETER.

How did it begin?

MARIE.

It began last year, when his sister died. He became very gloomy, perpetually spoke of death,

and then fell ill, as you know. And after his typhoid fever he changed entirely.

ALEXANDRA.

Still he came to see us in Moscow in the spring, and he was very amiable and played cards. He was very nice and quite normal.

MARIE.

Yes, but he was not the same.

PETER.

In what way?

MARIE.

He was perfectly indifferent to his family, and the New Testament had become an obsession. He read it all day; at night he got up to read it instead of sleeping, making notes and copying out passages. Then he began to visit bishops and aged monks, to discuss religion.

ALEXANDRA.

Did he go to confession and take the sacrament?

MARIE.

Before that he had not done so since his marriage, that is for twenty-five years. But at the time I am speaking of he confessed and took com-

munion at the monastery, and immediately afterward decided it was unnecessary to confess, or even to go to church at all.

ALEXANDRA.

You see how inconsistent he is. A month ago he went to church and kept all the fasts; now suddenly he thinks all that is useless.

MARIE.

Well, talk to him yourself.

ALEXANDRA.

I will; indeed I will.

PETER.

All that does not matter much.

ALEXANDRA.

It seems to you that it does not matter, because men have no religion.

PETER.

Do let me speak. I say that that is not the point. If he denies the Church, where does the New Testament come in?

MARIE.

He says we are to live in accordance with the Sermon on the Mount, and give everything away.

THE LIGHT THAT

PETER.

How are we to live ourselves if we give everything away?

ALEXANDRA.

And where does the Sermon on the Mount order us to shake hands with our footmen? It says "blessed are the meek," but there is not a word about shaking hands.

MARIE.

Of course he is fanatical in this, as he always is when he takes up anything. At one time it was music, then schools. . . . But that does not make it any easier for me.

PETER.

Why has he gone to town?

MARIE.

He did not tell me, but I know he has gone to attend the hearing of the timber-stealing case. The peasants cut down some of our forest.

PETER.

Those big fir-trees?

MARIE.

Yes. They were condemned to pay for them, and sentenced to imprisonment, and their appeal

is to be heard to-day. I am sure that is why he went.

ALEXANDRA.

He will forgive them, and to-morrow they will come and chop down all the trees in his park.

MARIE.

They seem to be beginning already. All the apple trees are broken, and the fields trampled. He forgives it all.

PETER.

How extraordinary!

ALEXANDRA.

That is exactly why I say that you must interfere. If it continues much longer — everything will go. I think it is your duty as a mother to take some steps.

MARIE.

What can I do?

ALEXANDRA.

What can you do, indeed? Put a stop to it, make him understand that it is impossible. You have children. What an example to set them!

MARIE.

It is hard, but I try to bear it, and to hope that

this will pass as all his other infatuations have done.

ALEXANDRA.

Yes; but God helps those who help themselves. You must make him feel that he is not alone, and that he is not living in the proper way.

MARIE.

The worst of it all is that he takes no interest in the children. I have to settle everything by myself. On the one hand I have a baby, and on the other, grown-up children — a girl and a boy — who both need attention and guidance, and I am alone. He used to be such a careful and tender father. Now he does not care about anything. Last night I told him Vania was lazy and had failed again in his examinations, and he said it would be much better for him to leave school altogether.

PETER.

Where would he send him?

MARIE.

Nowhere. That is the horrible part of it. Everything is wrong, but he does not say what we are to do.

PETER.

How strange!

ALEXANDRA.

Not at all strange. It is just the usual way you men have of finding fault with everything and doing nothing yourselves.

MARIE.

Stephen has finished his studies and must decide what he is going to do, but his father will not say anything to him about it. He wanted to enter the Civil Service — his father said it was useless; he wanted to enter the Horse Guards — Nicholas Ivanovich disapproved. The boy asked what he was to do, and his father asked why he did not go and plough: that would be far better than the Civil Service. What is he to do? He comes to me for advice, and I have to decide. But the means of carrying out any plan are in his father's hands.

ALEXANDRA.

You ought to tell Nicholas so plainly.

MARIE.

Yes; I must talk to him.

ALEXANDRA.

Tell him plainly that you cannot stand it: that you do your duty and that he must do his. Otherwise, he had better make the property over to you.

THE LIGHT THAT

MARIE.

Oh! that is so unpleasant.

ALEXANDRA.

I will tell him, if you like. I will tell him so straight out.

(A young priest enters, somewhat shy and nervous. He carries a book and shakes hands with all present.)

FATHER VASILY.

I have come to see Nicholas Ivanovich. I've — I've brought back a book.

MARIE.

He has gone to town, but he will soon return.

ALEXANDRA.

What book did he lend you?

FATHER VASILY.

It is Renan — yes — a book — the Life of Jesus.

PETER.

Oh! what a book for you to read.

ALEXANDRA.

(contemptuously.) Did Nicholas Ivanovich give you that to read? Well, do you agree with Nicholas Ivanovich, and with Monsieur Renan?

FATHER VASILY.

(*excited, lighting a cigarette.*) Yes, Nicholas Ivanovich gave it to me to read. Of course I do not agree with it. If I did I should not be, so to speak, a servant of the Church.

ALEXANDRA.

And since you are, so to speak, a true servant of the Church, why don't you convert Nicholas Ivanovich?

FATHER VASILY.

Everybody, if I may say so, has his own views on these subjects. And Nicholas Ivanovich, if I may say so, says much that is true. But on the main point he is in error concerning er — er — er — the Church.

ALEXANDRA.

And what are the true things that Nicholas Ivanovich says? Is it true that the Sermon on the Mount bids us give away our possessions to strangers, and let our family be beggars?

FATHER VASILY.

The family is, so to speak, held sacred in the Church, and the fathers of the Church have bestowed their blessing on the family, haven't they? But the highest perfection requires — well, yes, requires renunciation of earthly goods.

THE LIGHT THAT

ALEXANDRA.

That is all very well for saints, but ordinary mortals ought simply to act like good Christians.

FATHER VASILY.

Nobody can tell what he was sent to earth for.

ALEXANDRA.

You are married, I suppose?

FATHER VASILY.

Certainly.

ALEXANDRA.

And have you got any children?

FATHER VASILY.

Yes, two.

ALEXANDRA.

Then why don't you renounce earthly joys instead of smoking cigarettes?

FATHER VASILY.

It is, I may say, owing to my weakness and my unworthiness that I do not.

ALEXANDRA.

It seems to me that instead of bringing Nicholas Ivanovich to his senses, you are upholding him. I tell you frankly it is not right.

(*Enter NURSE.*)

NURSE.

Don't you hear baby crying? Please come to him.

MARIE.

I'm coming — I'm coming. (Exit.)

ALEXANDRA.

I am so sorry for my sister. I see how she suffers. It is no easy matter to manage a household — seven children, and one of them a baby at the breast. And he with his new-fangled theories — I really think he is not quite right here (*points to her head.*) Now tell me truly, what is this new religion you have discovered?

FATHER VASILY.

I don't quite understand, if I may say so.

ALEXANDRA.

Please do not pretend you do not understand. You know perfectly well what I am asking.

FATHER VASILY.

But, pardon me —

ALEXANDRA.

I ask you what this creed is, according to which you must shake hands with all peasants, allow them to cut down your forest, give them money for drink, and forsake your own family.

THE LIGHT THAT

FATHER VASILY.

I do not know.

ALEXANDRA.

He says it is the Christian teaching. You are a priest of the Orthodox Church. Therefore, you ought to know and ought to say whether the Christian teaching encourages stealing.

FATHER VASILY.

But I —

ALEXANDRA.

Otherwise, why do you call yourself a priest, and wear long hair and a cassock?

FATHER VASILY.

But we are never asked such things.

ALEXANDRA.

Really? Well I ask you? Yesterday Nicholas Ivanovich said the Gospel command is: "Give to every man that asks." How is that to be interpreted?

FATHER VASILY.

I think in the simplest sense.

ALEXANDRA.

I do not think so at all. I think it means, as we were always taught, that everybody has what God has given him.

FATHER VASILY.

Of course, but still —

ALEXANDRA.

It is quite evident that you are on his side. I was told you were; and it is very wrong of you, I tell you quite frankly. If it were some school-mistress, or some boy who accepted his every word — but you, in your position, ought to understand what your responsibilities are.

FATHER VASILY.

I try to.

ALEXANDRA.

How can he be called religious when he does not go to church, and does not recognise the sacraments? And you, instead of bringing him to reason, read Renan with him, and interpret the Gospel as you like.

FATHER VASILY.

(*agitated.*) I cannot answer. I am — I am — amazed, and would rather not say anything.

ALEXANDRA.

Oh! if I were a bishop I would teach you to read Renan and smoke cigarettes.

PETER.

Stop, for Heaven's sake! By what right —?

THE LIGHT THAT

ALEXANDRA.

Please don't lecture me. I am sure Father Vasily does not mind. Well, I have said all I had to say. It would be much worse if I had any ill-feeling. Is not that so?

FATHER VASILY.

Pardon me if I have expressed myself badly — pardon me. (*Awkward silence.*)

(*Enter LUBA and LISA.*)

(LUBA, the daughter of MARIE IVANOVNA, is a pretty, energetic girl of twenty. LISA, the daughter of ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA, is older. Both wear shawls on their heads, and carry baskets — they are going mushrooming in the woods. They greet ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA, PETER SEMENOVICH, and the priest.)

LUBA.

Where is mother?

ALEXANDRA.

She has just gone to nurse the baby.

PETER.

Mind you bring back plenty of mushrooms. A village girl brought some beauties this morning. I would go with you, but it is so hot.

LISA.

Do come, father.

ALEXANDRA.

Yes, do go. You are getting too fat.

PETER.

Very well. But I must get some cigarettes.
(*Exit.*)

ALEXANDRA.

Where are all the other young people?

LUBA.

Stephen has gone to the station on his bicycle; Metrofan Alexandrovich has gone to town with father; the little ones are playing croquet; and Vania is romping with the dogs in the porch.

ALEXANDRA.

Has Stephen come to any decision?

LUBA.

Yes, he is going to enlist as a volunteer. He was horribly rude to father yesterday.

ALEXANDRA.

Well, he has a good deal to bear. Even a worm will turn. The boy wants to begin life, and he is told to go and plough.

THE LIGHT THAT

LUBA.

Father did not say that. He said . . .

ALEXANDRA.

It makes no difference. The boy must make a start, and whatever he proposes is found fault with. Oh, there he is!

(*Enter STEPHEN on bicycle.*)

ALEXANDRA.

Talk of an angel and you hear his wings. We were just speaking of you. Luba says that you did not speak nicely to your father yesterday.

STEPHEN.

Not at all. Nothing particular happened. He expressed his opinion, and I expressed mine. It is not my fault if our views do not agree. Luba understands nothing, and is always ready to criticise.

ALEXANDRA.

What did you decide?

STEPHEN.

I don't know what father decided. I'm afraid he does not know himself; but I have made up my mind to join the Horse Guards as a volunteer. It is only in our house that difficulties are raised

about everything. It is quite simple. I have finished my studies; I have got to do my military service. It would be unpleasant to serve in the army with coarse, drunken officers, so I shall join the Guards, where I have friends.

ALEXANDRA.

Why did your father object?

STEPHEN.

Father? Oh, what's the good of talking about him. He is infatuated with his *idée fixe*, and sees only what he wants to see. He says that the military is the most dastardly of all the services, therefore I ought not to serve, and therefore he gives me no money.

LISA.

No, Stephen, that was not what he said. I was there. He said that if it is impossible to get out of it, one should at least wait till one is called as a recruit, but that to volunteer is to choose that service oneself.

STEPHEN.

It is I, not he, who will serve. He was an officer himself.

LISA.

He did not say that he would not give you

money, but that he could not participate in a matter that was contrary to all his principles.

STEPHEN.

Principles have nothing to do with it. I've got to serve, and there's an end of it.

LISA.

I only said what I heard.

STEPHEN.

I know. You agree with father in everything. Auntie, did you know that? Lisa is always on father's side.

LISA.

When it is a question of justice.

ALEXANDRA.

Oh, I know Lisa is always on the side of nonsense. She has a knack of finding it. She scents it from afar.

(Enter VANIA. He runs on to the veranda in a red blouse, accompanied by the dogs, with a telegram in his hand.)

VANIA.

(to LUBA.) Guess who is coming!

LUBA.

Why should I guess? Give me the telegram.
(*Stretches out her hand for it. VANIA holds it out of her reach.*)

VANIA.

I won't give it to you, and I won't tell you. It is some one who will make you blush.

LUBA.

Nonsense! Who is it from?

VANIA.

Aha! You are blushing, you are! Aunt Aline, isn't it true that she's blushing?

LUBA.

What nonsense! Aunt Aline, who is it from?

ALEXANDRA.

The Cheremshanovs.

LUBA.

Oh!

VANIA.

"Oh!" indeed. Why are you blushing?

LUBA.

Auntie, show me the telegram. (*Reads.*)
"Arrive by mail train; all three.—Cheremsha-

novs." That means the princess, Boris, and Tonia. Well, I am very glad.

VANIA.

Of course you are very glad. Stephen, see how she's blushing.

STEPHEN.

Oh, drop it. You keep on saying the same thing over and over again.

VANIA.

You say that because you're a bit smitten by Tonia yourself. You'll have to draw lots, because sister and brother may not marry brother and sister.

STEPHEN.

Don't talk such rubbish. You'd better be careful. I've warned you several times.

LISA.

If they come by the mail train they ought to be here directly.

LUBA.

That's true. Then we had better not go out.

(Enter PETER SEMENOVICH with cigarettes.)

SHINES IN DARKNESS

61

LUBA.

Uncle Peter, we are not going.

PETER.

Why?

LUBA.

The Cheremshanovs will be here directly. We had better have one set at tennis before they arrive. Stephen, will you play?

STEPHEN.

All right.

LUBA.

Vania and I against you and Lisa. Agreed? Well, then, I'll go and get the balls and call the village children. (*Exit.*)

PETER.

So much for my walk.

FATHER VASILY.

(*rising to go.*) Good-bye.

ALEXANDRA.

Oh, wait a little, Father Vasily. I want to talk to you, and Nicholas Ivanovich will soon be here.

THE LIGHT THAT

FATHER VASILY.

(*sits down and lights another cigarette.*) He may be some time yet.

ALEXANDRA.

A carriage has just driven up; I expect it is he.

PETER.

Which Princess Cheremshanov is it? Is it possible that her maiden name was Golitsine?

ALEXANDRA.

Yes, yes, that nice Princess Cheremshanov who lived in Rome with her aunt.

PETER.

I shall be glad to see her. I have not seen her since the time when we used to sing duets together in Rome. She sang very well. She has two children, I believe.

ALEXANDRA.

Yes, and they are both coming with her.

PETER.

I did not know they were so intimate with the Sarintsevs.

ALEXANDRA.

They are not intimate; but they were abroad

together last year, and I believe that the princess has designs on Luba for her son. She knows a thing or two.

PETER.

The Cheremshanovs were rich themselves.

ALEXANDRA.

They were. The prince is still alive, but he has dissipated his fortune, and has taken to drink. She petitioned the Tsar, saved a few crumbs, and left him. But she brought up her children splendidly. The daughter is an excellent musician, and the son went through the university, and is very nice. Still I do not think Masha is particularly pleased. This is not a time for guests. Ah, there is Nicholas.

(*Enter* NICHOLAS IVANOVICH.)

NICHOLAS.

Good morning, Aline. Hallo! Peter Semenov. (*To the priest.*) How do you do, Vasily Ermilovich. (*He shakes hands.*)

ALEXANDRA.

There is some coffee here. Shall I pour it out? It is not very hot, but it can be warmed up. (*She rings.*)

THE LIGHT THAT

NICHOLAS.

No, thank you. I have had breakfast.
Where is Masha?

ALEXANDRA.

She is nursing the baby.

NICHOLAS.

Is she well?

ALEXANDRA.

Pretty well. Have you done all your business?

NICHOLAS.

Yes. I think I will have some tea or some coffee if there is any. (*To the priest.*) Have you brought the book? Have you read it? I have been thinking about you all the way.

(*Enter footman; bows. NICHOLAS shakes hands with him.*)

ALEXANDRA.

(*shrugging her shoulders, and exchanging glances with her husband.*) Heat up the samovar, please.

NICHOLAS.

Never mind, Aline. I do not want anything, and if I do, I can drink it as it is.

MISSIE.

(seeing her father, runs from the croquet ground, and clasps her arms around his neck.) Father, come along.

NICHOLAS.

(fondling her.) Directly, directly. Let me have something to drink. Go and play. I will come soon. *(Sits down at the table, drinks tea, and eats.)*

ALEXANDRA.

Were they found guilty?

NICHOLAS.

Yes. They pleaded guilty. *(To the priest.)* I imagine Renan did not convince you.

ALEXANDRA.

But you disagreed with the verdict?

NICHOLAS.

(annoyed.) Of course I did. *(To priest.)* The main question for you lies, not in the divinity of Christ, not in the history of Christianity, but in the Church . . .

ALEXANDRA.

How was that? They confessed themselves: you gave them the lie. They were not stealing, only taking . . .

NICHOLAS.

(*begins speaking to the priest, then turning decidedly to ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.*) My dear Aline, do not worry me with innuendos and pin-pricks.

ALEXANDRA.

I am not doing anything of the sort.

NICHOLAS.

If you really want to know why I cannot prosecute the peasants for cutting down some trees which they badly needed. . . .

ALEXANDRA.

I dare say they need this samovar also.

NICHOLAS.

Well, if you want me to tell you why I cannot allow men to be imprisoned for felling ten trees in a wood that is considered mine. . . .

ALEXANDRA.

Considered so by every one.

PETER.

There you are, arguing again. I shall go out with the dogs. (*He leaves the veranda.*)

NICHOLAS.

Even supposing I were to consider that wood

mine — though that is impossible — we have 2,250 acres of forest, with approximately 200 trees on each — I think that makes about 450,000 in all. They felled 10 — that is $\frac{1}{45000}$ part. Well, is it worth while, is it possible, to drag a man away from his family and put him in prison for such a thing?

STEPHEN.

Well, if you don't prosecute for this $\frac{1}{45000}$ part, the rest of the 45,000 will also soon be felled.

NICHOLAS.

I only gave that answer in reply to your aunt. In reality, I have no right to this forest. The land belongs to all — that is, to no individual — and we personally have never done a stroke of work on it.

STEPHEN.

Oh, no! You saved up, and you looked after the land.

NICHOLAS.

How did I get enough to save up, and when did I ever look after the forest myself? But there! you can't prove such things to a man who feels no shame in injuring others.

STEPHEN.

No one is injuring others.

NICHOLAS.

If he is not ashamed of being idle — of living on the labour of others — it cannot be proved, and all the political economy you learnt at the university only serves to justify your position.

STEPHEN.

On the contrary, science destroys all prejudices.

NICHOLAS.

Well, that does not matter. What does matter to me is the fact that if I were in Ephim's place, I should do just what he did; and having done it I should be in despair if I were imprisoned, and therefore, since I *would do unto others as I would be done by*, I cannot prosecute him, and must do my best to get him off.

PETER.

But, in that case, it is not possible to own anything.

ALEXANDRA.

Then it is much more profitable to steal than to work.

STEPHEN.

You never answer one's arguments. ' I say that he who economises has a right to use his savings.

Together

NICHOLAS.

(*smiling.*) I do not know which of you to answer. (*to PETER.*) It is not possible to own anything.

ALEXANDRA.

If that is so, one cannot have clothes or a crust of bread. One must give up everything, and life becomes impossible.

NICHOLAS.

It is impossible to live as we live.

STEPHEN.

Then we must die. Therefore that teaching is no good for life.

NICHOLAS.

On the contrary, it is given only for life. Yes, we must relinquish everything — not only a forest by which we profit, though we have never seen it, but we should give up our clothes and our bread even.

ALEXANDRA.

And the children's bread also?

NICHOLAS.

Yes, the children's also — and not bread only — we must give up ourselves. That is the whole teaching of Christ. We must use all our efforts to give up ourselves.

THE LIGHT THAT

STEPHEN.

To die, therefore?

NICHOLAS.

Yes, if you die *for others* it would be good both for yourself and for others; but the fact remains that man is not simply a spirit, but a spirit in the flesh; and the flesh impels us to live for self, while the enlightened spirit urges us to live for God, for others; and the result of this conflict makes us take a middle course. The nearer we attain to God the better. Therefore the more we try to live for God the better. The flesh will make sufficient efforts on its own account.

STEPHEN.

Why take a middle course? If such a life is best, then one should give up everything and die.

NICHOLAS.

It would be splendid. Try to do it, and you will find it good for you as well as for others.

ALEXANDRA.

No, all this is neither clear nor simple. It is dragged in by the hair.

NICHOLAS.

What am I to do? I cannot make you understand. Enough of this!

STEPHEN.

Enough, indeed! I do not understand.
(*Exit.*)

NICHOLAS.

(*to the priest.*) Well, what did you think of the book?

FATHER VASILY.

(*agitated.*) I hardly know what to say. The historical side is sufficiently studied, but it is hardly convincingly or satisfactorily proved — perhaps because the data are insufficient. You cannot prove the divinity or non-divinity of Christ historically. There is only one unanswerable proof. . . .

(*During the conversation all, one after the other, leave the room — first the ladies, then STEPHEN, and finally PETER SEMENOVICH, leaving the priest and NICHOLAS alone.*)

NICHOLAS.

You mean the Church?

FATHER VASILY.

Yes, of course, the Church; the testimony of men — well, of truly holy men, shall we say?

NICHOLAS.

It would certainly be excellent if such an infallible authority existed which we could trust, and

it is desirable that it should exist. But its desirability is no proof that it does exist.

FATHER VASILY.

I contend that it does prove it. God could not, as it were, let His law be distorted, be badly interpreted; and He had to institute a — well — a custodian of His truths. He had to, hadn't He, to prevent the distortion of these truths?

NICHOLAS.

Very well; but you set out to prove the truths themselves, and now you are proving the truth of the custodians.

FATHER VASILY.

Well, in regard to that, we must, so to speak, believe.

NICHOLAS.

Believe? We cannot live without belief. We must believe, but not what others tell us; only what we are led to by the course of our own thoughts, our own reason . . . the belief in God, in the true life everlasting.

FATHER VASILY.

Reason may deceive you — each man has his own —

NICHOLAS.

(*warmly.*) That is horrible blasphemy! God has given us one holy instrument by which to know the truth — one that can unite us all, and we distrust it!

FATHER VASILY.

But how can we trust it when there is so much difference of opinion — isn't there?

NICHOLAS.

Where is there any difference of opinion as to two and two making four; as to our not doing to others what we do not wish to be done to ourselves; as to there being a cause for everything; and such truths as these? We all recognise these truths because they are in accordance with our reason. As to such questions as what God revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai, whether or not Buddha flew away on a sunbeam, or whether Mohammed and Christ flew up to heaven — and things of that sort — we all disagree.

FATHER VASILY.

No, we do not all disagree. All who have the truth are united in one faith in the God Christ.

NICHOLAS.

You are not united then because you all differ,

so why should I believe you rather than a Buddhist lama? Simply because I happened to be born in your faith?

(Sounds of dispute from the tennis-court. "Out." "No, it was not." "I saw it.")

During the conversation the FOOTMAN rearranges the table, bringing in fresh tea and coffee.)

NICHOLAS.

(continuing.) You say the Church gives union. But, on the contrary, the worst differences were always caused by the Church. "How often would I have gathered Thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings."

FATHER VASILY.

It was so before Christ. Christ united all.

NICHOLAS.

Christ united us all, but we became disunited because we understood Him wrongly. He destroyed all Churches.

FATHER VASILY.

Then what does "tell the Church" mean?

NICHOLAS.

It is not a question of words, nor do these words apply to the Church. The whole thing is the spirit of the teaching. Christ's teaching is universal, and contains all beliefs, and does not contain anything that is exclusive — neither the resurrection, nor the divinity of Christ, nor the sacraments — indeed, nothing that can disunite.

FATHER VASILY.

Well, that is your interpretation of the Christian teaching; but the Christian teaching is entirely founded on the divinity of Christ and His resurrection.

NICHOLAS.

That is why Churches are so horrible. They disunite by declaring that they possess the full, certain, and infallible truth — “filling us with the Holy Ghost.” It began with the first meeting of the apostles. From that moment they began to affirm that they were possessed of full and *exclusive* truth. Why, if I say that there is a God, that the world began, all will agree with me, and this recognition of God will unite us; but if I say there is a god Brahma, or a Jewish god, or a Trinity — such a divinity disunites. Men want to unite and invent a means to that end, but they disregard the only certain means of union — an

aspiration after truth. It is as if in a great building, where the light falls from the roof on to the middle of the floor, men were to stand in groups in the corners instead of going into the light. If they went into the light they would, without thinking about it, be united.

FATHER VASILY.

But how would you guide the people without having, so to speak, a fixed truth?

NICHOLAS.

That is the horror of it. Each of us has his own soul to save, has God's work to do, and we are all anxious about saving and teaching others. And what do we teach them? It is simply horrible to think that at the end of the nineteenth century we are teaching that God created the world in six days, then sent a flood, putting all the animals into the Ark, and all the absurd nonsense of the Old Testament; and then that Christ ordered us to be baptised in water, or the absurdity of the redemption without which you cannot be saved; then that Christ flew away to skies which do not exist, and there sits at the right hand of God the Father. We are accustomed to all this, but really it is terrible. A pure child, open to good and truth, asks us what the world is, what its law is, and instead of teaching him the love and

truth which we have believed, we carefully stuff his head with all sorts of dreadful, absurd lies and horrors, ascribing them all to God. This is awful. It is a crime that nothing can surpass. And we, and you with your Church, do all this. Forgive me.

FATHER VASILY.

Yes, if you look at Christ's teaching in that way — rationally, so to speak — then it is so.

NICHOLAS.

It is the same, no matter in what way you look at it.

(Silence. The PRIEST takes leave of him. Enter ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.)

ALEXANDRA.

Good-bye, Father Vasily. Do not listen to him; he will lead you astray.

FATHER VASILY.

Oh no! One must put the Gospel to the test. It is too important a matter to be neglected, isn't it?

(Exit.)

ALEXANDRA.

Really, Nicholas, you have no pity on him. Though he is a priest, he is little more than a

boy. He cannot have settled convictions; he cannot be steadfast. . . .

NICHOLAS.

Are we to let him become confirmed in them, to harden in deceit? Why should we? Ah, he is a good, sincere man.

ALEXANDRA.

Well, what would happen to him were he to believe you?

NICHOLAS.

It is not a question of believing me; but if he could see the truth it would be well for him and for every one.

ALEXANDRA.

If it were really well, all would believe you. As it is, we see just the contrary. No one believes you — your wife least of all. She cannot believe you.

NICHOLAS.

Who told you so?

ALEXANDRA.

Well, explain all this to Masha. She never understood and never will, and no one in the world ever will, understand why you should take care of strangers and neglect your own children. Explain that to Masha.

NICHOLAS.

Masha is sure to understand. Forgive me, Aline, but if it were not for outside influences, to which she is so susceptible, she would understand me and go hand-in-hand with me.

ALEXANDRA.

To deprive her own children for the drunken Ephim and Co.? Never. As for your being angry with me, you will excuse me, but I cannot help speaking. . . .

NICHOLAS.

I am not angry. On the contrary, I am very glad that you said all you had to say, and gave me the opportunity of giving all my own views. I thought it over on my way to-day, and I am going to tell her at once, and you will see that she will agree, for she is both wise and good.

ALEXANDRA.

You will allow me to have my doubts.

NICHOLAS.

Well, I have none. This is no invention of mine: it is what we all know, and what Christ revealed to us.

ALEXANDRA.

You think He revealed *this*? I think He revealed something quite different.

NICHOLAS.

There can be nothing different. Just listen.
Do not argue; listen to me.

ALEXANDRA.

I am listening.

NICHOLAS.

You admit that at any minute we may die and return to nothingness or to God, who demands that we should live according to His will.

ALEXANDRA.

Well?

NICHOLAS.

Well, what else am I to do in this life but that which the highest Judge that is in my soul — my conscience, God — demands? My conscience, God, demands that I should consider all men equal, should love and serve all.

ALEXANDRA.

Your children among the rest.

NICHOLAS.

Of course; but I must do everything my conscience dictates. The most important thing of all is to recognise that my life does not belong to me, nor yours to you, but to God, who sent us and requires us to live according to His will. And His will . . .

ALEXANDRA.

And you will convince Masha of this?

NICHOLAS.

Certainly.

ALEXANDRA.

She will cease to educate her children as she should and will desert them? Never.

NICHOLAS.

Not only she; you too will understand that that is the only thing to do.

ALEXANDRA.

Never!

(Enter MARIE IVANOVNA.)

NICHOLAS.

Well, Masha, I hope I did not wake you up this morning.

MARIE.

No, I was not asleep. Did you have a pleasant journey?

NICHOLAS.

Yes, very pleasant.

MARIE.

Why are you drinking that cold tea? Anyhow, we must have some fresh made for our guests. You know that Princess Cheremshanova is coming with her son and daughter.

THE LIGHT THAT

NICHOLAS.

If you are pleased, so am I.

MARIE.

Yes. I am very fond of her and of her children, but it is hardly the moment for visitors.

ALEXANDRA.

Well, have a talk with him, and I will go and watch the game.

(A silence, after which MARIE IVANOVNA and NICHOLAS IVANOVICH both speak at once.)

Together. {	MARIE.
	It is hardly the moment, because we must talk things over.
	NICHOLAS.
	I was just telling Aline. . . .

MARIE.

What?

NICHOLAS.

No; you speak.

MARIE.

Well, I wanted to talk to you about Stephen. Something must be decided. The poor boy is in

suspense, does not know what is going to happen, and comes to me; but how can I decide?

NICHOLAS.

How can any one decide? He can decide for himself.

MARIE.

Why, you know he wants to enter the Guards as a volunteer, and he cannot do it without a certificate from you, and he must have money, and you give him nothing (*agitated.*)

NICHOLAS.

Masha, for heaven's sake do not get agitated, and listen to me. I neither give nor refuse. To enter the military service voluntarily I consider foolish madness, such as only a savage is capable of. If he does not understand the meanness, the baseness of such an action, or if he does it out of self-interest —

MARIE.

Oh, everything seems mad and foolish to you now. He wants to live — *you* have lived.

NICHOLAS.

(*hotly.*) I lived without understanding, with no one to tell me. But it depends on him now — not on me.

THE LIGHT THAT

MARIE.

But it does depend on you, when you give him no money.

NICHOLAS.

I cannot give what does not belong to me.

MARIE.

What do you mean by "does not belong to me" ?

NICHOLAS.

The labour of others does not belong to me. To give him money, I must take from others. I have no right to; I cannot. So long as I am the master of the estate I cannot dispose of it otherwise than as my conscience dictates. I cannot spend the labour of peasants, which costs them their whole strength, on the drinking-bouts of a hussar. Take the estate from me; then I shall not be responsible.

MARIE.

You know I do not want that, and I cannot do it. I have to educate the children, to nurse them, to bring them into the world. It is cruel.

NICHOLAS.

Dearest Masha, that is not the point. When you began to speak, I began also, and I wanted so

to talk frankly to you. All this is impossible. We live together, and do not understand each other; sometimes it seems as though we misunderstood each other on purpose.

MARIE.

I want to understand you, but I cannot. I cannot understand what has come over you.

NICHOLAS.

Then try to understand now. It is hardly the moment, but heaven knows when there will be a moment. Try to understand not only me, but yourself and your own life. We cannot go on living without knowing what we live for.

MARIE.

We lived so before, and we lived very well
(*noting an expression of displeasure on his face.*)
— All right; I am listening.

NICHOLAS.

I used to live thus, thus — that is to say, without thinking why I lived; but the time came when I was aghast. We live on the labour of others. we make others work for us, we bring children into the world, and educate them for the same thing. Old age, death, will come, and I shall

ask myself: "What did I live for? To produce parasites like myself?" Besides, this life is not even amusing. It is only tolerable when one is overflowing with the energy of life, like Vania.

MARIE.

Every one lives like that.

NICHOLAS.

And every one is unhappy.

MARIE.

Not at all.

NICHOLAS.

I, at least, discovered that I was terribly unhappy, and that I was causing you and the children to be unhappy, and I asked myself: "Is it possible that God created you for this?" And directly I thought that, I felt that the answer was "No." Then I asked myself: "What *did* God create us for?"

(A footman enters. MARIE IVANOVNA does not listen to her husband, but speaks to the footman.)

MARIE.

Bring some hot milk.

NICHOLAS.

I found the answer in the Gospel: we do not live for ourselves at all. It was revealed to me clearly once when I was thinking over the parable of the labourers in the vineyard. Do you remember it?

MARIE.

Yes; I know the labourers.

NICHOLAS.

Somehow or other that parable showed me my mistake more clearly than anything. I had believed that my life was my own just as those labourers believed that the vineyard was theirs, and everything was terrible to me. But as soon as I realised that my life was not my own, that I was sent into the world to do the work of God —

MARIE.

What of that? We all know that.

NICHOLAS.

Well, if we know it, we cannot continue to live as we do, when we know our whole life is not a fulfilment of this will, but, on the contrary, is in perpetual contradiction to it.

MARIE.

In what way is it a contradiction when we do no harm to any one?

NICHOLAS.

How can you say we do no harm to any one? That is exactly the conception of life that the labourers in the vineyard had. We —

MARIE.

Oh, yes; I know the parable. Well, what of it? He gave them all the same portion.

NICHOLAS.

(*after a silence.*) No; that is not it. But think of this, Masha; we have only one life, and it is in our power to live it devoutly or to ruin it.

MARIE.

I cannot think and discuss. I get no sleep at night; I am nursing baby. I manage the whole household, and instead of helping me you keep on telling me things I do not understand.

NICHOLAS.

Masha!

MARIE.

And now these visitors are arriving.

NICHOLAS.

But we will talk it out to the end, shall we not?
(*He kisses her.*) Yes?

MARIE.

Yes. But do be your former self.

NICHOLAS.

That I cannot. But listen to me —
(*The sound of approaching carriage bells and wheels is heard.*)

MARIE.

There is no time now — they have arrived. I must go to them.

(*Disappears round the corner of the house, followed by STEPHEN and LUBA. ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA and her husband and LISA come on to the veranda. NICHOLAS IVANOVICH walks about in deep thought.*)

VANIA.

(*jumping over a bench.*) I don't give in; we'll finish the game! Well, Luba?

LUBA.

(*seriously.*) No nonsense, please!

THE LIGHT THAT

ALEXANDRA.

Well, have you convinced her?

NICHOLAS.

Aline, what is going on between us now is serious, and jokes are quite out of place. It is not I who am convincing her, but life, truth, God. Therefore she cannot help being convinced — if not to-day, then to-morrow; if not to-morrow — The worst of it all is that no one ever has time. Who has come?

PETER.

The Cheremshanovs — Katia Cheremshanova, whom I have not seen for eighteen years. The last time we met we sang together: “*La ei darem la mano.*” (*He sings.*)

ALEXANDRA.

(*to her husband.*) Please do not interfere, and do not imagine that I have quarrelled with Nicholas. I am speaking the truth. (*To NICHOLAS.*) I was not joking in the least, but it seemed so strange that you wanted to convince Masha at the very moment when she wanted to talk matters over with you.

NICHOLAS.

Very well, very well. Here they are. Please tell Masha that I am in my room. (*Exit.*)

ACT II

SCENE I

Same place in the country. Time: One week later.

(Scene represents large drawing-room. Table is laid with samovar, tea and coffee. Piano against the wall, music-rack.)

MARIE IVANOVNA, *the PRINCESS,*
and PETER SEMENOVICH *are seated at the table.)*

PETER.

Yes, Princess. It does not seem so long ago that you used to sing *Rosine*, and I . . . Whereas now I should not even do for a Don Basilio.

PRINCESS.

Now the children might sing, but times have altered.

PETER.

Yes, they are positivists. But I hear your daughter is a very serious and excellent musician. Are they still asleep?

THE LIGHT THAT

MARIE.

Yes, they went out riding by moonlight and returned very late. I was nursing baby and heard them.

PETER.

And when does my better half return? Have you sent the carriage for her?

MARIE.

Yes, it went a long time ago. She ought to be here soon.

PRINCESS.

Did Alexandra Ivanovna really go with the sole purpose of fetching Father Gerasim?

MARIE.

Yes, the thought suddenly struck her yesterday, and she flew off at once.

PRINCESS.

What energy! I admire it.

PETER.

Oh, as to that, it never fails us. (*Takes out a cigar.*) Well, I think I'll take a turn in the park with the dogs and smoke while the young people are getting up.

PRINCESS.

I don't know, dear Marie Ivanovna, but I really think you take it too much to heart. I understand him. He is full of such high aspiration. What does it matter if he does give his property away to the poor? It's only too true that we all think too much of ourselves.

MARIE.

Oh, if it were only that. But you don't know him — you do not know all. It is not only helping the poor. It is a complete change — the utter wrecking of everything.

PRINCESS.

I certainly do not wish to intrude into your family life, but if you would allow me . . .

MARIE.

But I look on you as one of the family, especially now.

PRINCESS.

I should just advise you to put your demands plainly before him, and openly come to some agreement with him as to the limits —

MARIE.

(*agitated.*) There are no limits! He wishes to

give everything away. He wants me at my age to become a cook — a laundress.

PRINCESS.

Oh, impossible! How extraordinary!

MARIE.

(*taking out a letter.*) Now we are quite alone; I should like to tell you everything. Yesterday he wrote me this letter. I will read it to you.

PRINCESS.

What! living in the same house with you, he writes you letters? How strange!

MARIE.

Oh, no. I quite understand. He gets so excited when he talks I have been feeling anxious about his health lately.

PRINCESS.

Well, what does he write?

MARIE.

Listen. (*She reads.*) "You reproach me for destroying our former life without offering you anything else or saying how I intend to provide for my family. When we begin to talk we both get excited, so I am writing instead. I have told

you many times why I can't go on living as I have done. And as for trying to convince you that it is wrong to live as we have been accustomed to do, that we must lead a Christian life, I cannot do that in a letter. You can do one of two things — either believe in truth and liberty and go with me, or believe in me, give yourself trustfully to me, and follow me." (*Stops reading.*) But I can do neither of these things! I do not believe that I ought to live as he desires, and moreover I love the children and I cannot trust him. (*Continues to read.*) "My plan is this. We will give all our land to the peasants, leaving ourselves fifty acres and the kitchen garden and the flooded meadow. We will try to work, but we will not force ourselves or our children to work. What we reserve for ourselves will bring in about five hundred roubles * a year."

PRINCESS

It is impossible to live on five hundred roubles a year with seven children.

MARIE.

Well, and then he goes on to say that we will give up our house for a school and live in the gardener's cottage, in two rooms.

* A rouble = about 2s.

PRINCESS.

Yes, I really begin to think that he's not well. What have you answered?

MARIE.

I told him I could not agree to it. That, were I alone, I would follow him anywhere. But with the children . . . Just think—I am nursing little Nicholas. I told him it was impossible to break up everything like that. Was this what I married him for? I am already old and feeble. It is not an easy matter to bring nine children into the world and nurse them.

PRINCESS.

I never dreamt it had gone so far!

MARIE.

Well, that is how matters stand, and I can't imagine what will become of us. Yesterday he remitted the entire rent of the peasants from Dmitrovka, and he intends to give that land to them outright.

PRINCESS.

I really think you ought not to permit that. It is our duty to protect our children. If he cannot own his estate himself, let him give it to you.

MARIE.

I don't want it.

PRINCESS.

But it is your duty to retain it, for the sake of your children. Let him make it over to you.

MARIE.

My sister suggested that to him, but he said he had no right to dispose of it, as the land belonged to those who tilled it, and it was his duty to give it to the peasants.

PRINCESS.

Yes, I see it is really much more serious than I thought.

MARIE.

And fancy! our priest is on his side.

PRINCESS.

I noticed that yesterday.

MARIE.

Now my sister has gone to Moscow to consult a lawyer, and above all to bring Father Gerasim back with her to see if he has any influence with him.

PRINCESS.

I do not think that Christianity consists in ruining one's own family.

THE LIGHT THAT

MARIE.

But he will not trust Father Gerasim. He is too far confirmed in his convictions, and you know when he talks I can find no arguments to use against him. The worst of it is — I believe he is right.

PRINCESS.

That is only because you love him.

MARIE.

I do not know why, but it is dreadful, dreadful. Everything remains unsettled. That's what religion does!

(Enter NURSE.)

NURSE.

Please, ma'am, the baby is awake and wants you.

MARIE.

I will come in a moment. I am worried, and the baby has colic, you see. I am coming.

(Exit PRINCESS.)

(From the other side enters NICHOLAS with a paper in his hand.)

NICHOLAS.

It is incredible!

MARIE.

What is the matter?

NICHOLAS.

The matter is just this, that for a pine tree of ours, Peter is to go to jail.

MARIE.

But why?

NICHOLAS.

Because he felled it. They took the matter to court, and he is sentenced to a month's imprisonment. His wife came to implore me —

MARIE.

Well, can't you help her?

NICHOLAS.

I cannot now. The only thing to do is not to own any forest; and I will not! I will just go and see if I can help in the trouble of which I myself have been the cause.

(*Enter LUBA and BORIS.*)

LUBA.

Good morning, father. (*Kisses him.*)
Where are you going?

NICHOLAS.

I have just come from the village and I'm now on my way back. A hungry man is being put in jail for —

LUBA.

It's probably Peter.

NICHOLAS.

Yes — Peter.

(*Exeunt* NICHOLAS and MARIE IVANOVNA.)

LUBA.

(*sitting down before the samovar.*) Will you take coffee or tea?

BORIS.

I do not care.

LUBA.

Things are just as they were. I cannot see how it will end.

BORIS.

I do not quite understand him. I know the peasants are poor and ignorant, that it's our duty to help them. But not by showing favour to thieves.

LUBA.

But how?

BORIS.

By everything we do. We must dedicate all our knowledge to them, but we cannot give up our life.

LUBA.

Father says that is just what we must do.

SHINES IN DARKNESS

721

BORIS.

I do not see why. It is quite possible to help the people without ruining one's own life, and that is what I intend doing myself. If only you —

LUBA.

Your wishes are mine. And I am not afraid of anything.

BORIS.

But what about your ear-rings, and your dress?

LUBA.

The ear-rings we can sell, and as for the frock, I might dress differently without being altogether ugly.

BORIS.

I want to have another talk with him. Do you think I should be in his way if I went to the village?

LUBA.

I'm sure you wouldn't. I can see he is very fond of you. Yesterday he talked to you nearly all the time.

BORIS.

Then I'll go.

LUBA.

Yes, do. And I'll go and wake up Lisa and Tonia.

(Exit on different sides.)

SCENE II

Village street. The peasant IVAN ZIABREV is lying on the ground at a cottage door, with a sheepskin coat over him.

IVAN.

Malashka!

(From behind the cottage comes a little girl with a baby in her arms. The baby cries.)

I want a drink of water.

(MALASHKA goes into the cottage. The baby is heard crying still. She brings a jug of water.)

Why do you hit the baby and make him howl?
I'll tell your mother.

MALASHKA.

Do tell mother! Baby's howling because he's hungry.

IVAN.

(drinking.) Why don't you go and get some milk at Demkin's?

MALASHKA.

I have been. They haven't got any, and there was not a soul at home.

IVAN.

Oh, I wish Death would come quicker. Has the dinner bell rung?

MALASHKA.

(screaming at the top of her voice.) Yes, it has rung! There's the master coming!

(Enter NICHOLAS.)

NICHOLAS.

Why are you lying out here?

IVAN.

There are flies there. And it's too hot.

NICHOLAS.

Have you got warm then?

IVAN.

I feel as if I were on fire now.

NICHOLAS.

Where is Peter? At home?

IVAN.

How could he be, at this hour? He's gone to the fields to bring in the sheaves.

NICHOLAS.

I was told he had been arrested.

THE LIGHT THAT

IVAN.

That's quite true. The policeman has gone to the field after him.

(Enter a pregnant WOMAN, with a sheaf of oats and a pitchfork, and immediately hits MALASHKA over the head.)

WOMAN.

Why did you go away from the baby? Do listen to him screaming. You only think of running out in the road.

MALASHKA.

(crying loudly.) I just came out to give father a drink of water.

WOMAN.

I'll give it you. *(Sees NICHOLAS IVANOVICH.)* Good-day, Nicholas Ivanovich. You see what they are all bringing me to! There's no one but me to do anything, and I'm worn out. Now they're taking our very last man to jail, and this lazy lout is lying about doing nothing.

NICHOLAS.

Why do you say that? You can see he is ill.

WOMAN.

Ill, indeed. What about me? When there's

work to be done then he's sick, but if he wants to go on the spree and knock me about, he's well enough. Let him die like a dog. I don't care.

NICHOLAS.

How sinful to talk like that!

WOMAN.

I know it's a sin. But my temper gets the better of me. Look how I am, and I have to work for two. All the others have got their oats in, and a quarter of our field isn't cut yet. I ought not to have stopped, but I had to come home and see after the children.

NICHOLAS.

I will have your oats cut for you and will send some binders out to your field.

WOMAN.

Oh, I can manage the binding myself, if we can only get it cut. Oh, Nicholas Ivanovich, do you think he's going to die? He's very low indeed.

NICHOLAS.

I'm sure I don't know; but he's certainly very weak. I think he had better be taken to the hospital.

WOMAN.

Oh, my God! (*Begins to weep loudly.*)

Don't take him away. Let him die here. (*To the husband.*) What did you say?

IVAN.

I want to go to hospital. I'm lying here worse than a dog.

WOMAN.

Oh, I don't know what to do! I shall go mad! Malashka, get dinner!

NICHOLAS.

And what have you got for dinner?

WOMAN.

Some potatoes and bread. That's all we've got. (*Goes into cottage, the sounds of a pig squealing and children crying are heard.*)

IVAN.

(*groaning.*) Oh, God, if Death would come!
(*Enter BORIS.*)

BORIS.

Can't I be of any use here!

NICHOLAS.

No one can be of any use here. The evil is too deeply rooted. We can only be of use to ourselves by realising on what foundations we build our happiness. Here is a family—five chil-

dren — the wife pregnant, the husband ill, and nothing in the house to eat but potatoes. And at this moment it is a question whether they will have food for next year. And there is no help for them. How can one help? I am going to hire a man to work for them. But who will that man be? A man as badly off as they are, who has given up tilling his own land through drunkenness or poverty.

BORIS.

Excuse me, but if that is the case, why are you here?

NICHOLAS.

I am trying to ascertain my own position; to know who looks after our gardens, builds our houses, makes our clothes, feeds and dresses us.

(PEASANTS with scythes and
WOMEN with pitchforks pass them.
They bow to the master.)

NICHOLAS.

(*stopping one of them.*) Ephraim, can you take the job of cutting Ivan's oats for him?

EPHRAIM.

(*shaking his head.*) I'd do it gladly, but I can't. I haven't got my own in yet. I'm just hurrying off to do it now. Why? Is Ivan dying?

THE LIGHT THAT

ANOTHER PEASANT.

There's old Sebastian. Maybe he can take the job. Sebastian! They want a man to reap.

SEBASTIAN.

Take the job yourself if you want it. One day may mean the whole year in such weather as this.

NICHOLAS.

(to BORIS.) All those men are half-starved, many of them ill or old, living on bread and water. Look at that old man. He suffers from rupture — and he works from four in the morning till ten at night, and is barely alive. And we — now, is it possible, when we once understand this, to go on living quietly and calling ourselves Christians? Can we call ourselves anything short of beasts?

BORIS.

But what are we to do?

NICHOLAS.

Not be a party to evil. Not possess land. Not feed upon their toil. How this can be managed I do not know. The thing is — at least so it was with me. I lived and did not understand what sort of life I led. I didn't understand that I was a son of God and that we were all sons of

God and all brothers. But when I came to understand that, when I saw that all had equal claims on life, my whole life was changed. I cannot explain it very well to you, I can only say that before, I was blind, just as my family still are, but now my eyes are opened I cannot help seeing. And, seeing, I cannot go on living as before. But, of course, for the present we must do as best we can.

(Enter POLICE-SERGEANT, with PETER, and his wife and a boy.)

PETER.

(falling on his knees before NICHOLAS IVANOVICH.) Forgive me, for Christ's sake. I'm done for! My wife can't get along alone. Can't you let me go on bail?

NICHOLAS.

I will see about it. I will write. *(To the POLICE-SERGEANT.)* Couldn't you let him stay here meanwhile?

SERGEANT.

I have orders to take him to the police-station.

NICHOLAS.

Go then; I will hire a labourer. I will do all that is possible. This is my fault. How can one live like this?

(Exit.)

SCENE III

Same as SCENE I. It is raining outside. Drawing-room with a piano. TONIA has just finished playing the Schumann Sonata, and is still sitting at the piano. Stephen stands near the piano. After the music, LUBA, LISA, ANNA IVANOVNA, MITROFAN DMITRICH and the Priest are all greatly moved.

LUBA.

The Andante is so lovely.

STEPHEN.

No — the Scherzo! But the whole thing is charming.

LISA.

Beautiful!

STEPHEN.

(to TONIA.) I had no idea you were such an artist. Your rendering is masterly. Difficulties do not seem to exist for you, you only think of the expression, and it is so exquisitely delicate.

LUBA.

So noble, too!

SHINES IN DARKNESS

111

TONIA.

I feel it is not what I want it to be. There's a great deal lacking in my playing.

LISA.

It could not be better. It is marvellous.

LUBA.

Schumann is very great. But I think Chopin appeals to the heart more.

STEPHEN.

He is more lyrical.

TONIA.

I do not think a comparison is possible.

LUBA.

Do you remember that Prelude of his?

TONIA.

Do you mean the so-called George Sand one?
(*Begins to play.*)

LUBA.

No, not that one. That is lovely, but it is hackneyed. Please play this one.

(*TONIA tries to play, but breaks off and stops.*)

LUBA.

No, the one in D minor.

THE LIGHT THAT

TONIA.

Oh, this one. It is wonderful. It is like chaos before the Creation.

STEPHEN.

(*laughs.*) Yes, yes! Do play it. No, better not — you are tired. We have already had a wonderful morning, thanks to you.

(*TONIA rises and looks out of the window.*)

TONIA.

There are the peasants again.

LUBA.

That's what is so precious in music. I understand Saul. I'm not tormented by the devil, but I know how Saul felt. There's no art that can make one forget everything like music.

TONIA.

And yet you are going to marry a man who doesn't understand music.

LUBA.

Oh, but — Boris does understand it.

BORIS.

(*absent-minded.*) Music! — Yes, I like music. But it isn't important. And I am rather sorry

for the life that people lead who attach so much importance to it.

(There are sweets on the table and they all eat.)

LUBA.

How nice to be engaged! Then one always has sweets.

BORIS.

Oh, it is not I — it's mother.

TONIA.

Very nice of her. *(Goes to the window.)*
Whom do you want to see? The peasants have come to see Nicholas Ivanovich.

LUBA.

(going to the window.) He is not at home.
Wait.

TONIA.

And what about poetry?

LUBA.

No, the value of music is that it takes hold of you, and carries you away from reality. We were all so gloomy just now, and when you began to play, everything brightened. It did really. Take the waltzes of Chopin. They're hackneyed, of course, but —

TONIA.

This one? *(She plays.)*

SCENE IV

(*Enter NICHOLAS. He greets
TONIA, LUBA, STEPHEN, and LISA.*)

NICHOLAS.
(*to LUBA.*) Where's Mother?

LUBA.
I think she is in the nursery. Father, how wonderfully Tonia plays. Where have you been?

NICHOLAS.
In the village.
(*STEPHEN calls the footman, who
enters.*)

STEPHEN.
Bring another samovar.

NICHOLAS.
(*shakes hands with footman.*) Good morning!
(*Footman confused. Exit. Exit
also NICHOLAS.*)

STEPHEN.
Poor chap! He's so embarrassed. He doesn't understand. It's as if we were all guilty somehow.

NICHOLAS.

(*re-enters.*) I was going to my room without telling you what I felt. I think it was wrong of me. (*To TONIA.*) If you, who are our guest, are hurt by what I am going to say, please forgive me, as I must speak. You said just now, Luba, that Tonia played well. Here you are, seven or eight healthy young men and women. You slept till ten o'clock. Then you had food and drink, and you are still eating, and you play and discuss music. And there, where I have just come from, the people are up at three in the morning. Some have not slept at all, having watched the cattle all night, and all of them, even the old, the sick, and the children, and the women with babies at the breast and those who are about to have children, work with their utmost strength, that we may enjoy the fruits of their labour. And as if that were not enough, one of them, the only worker in the family, is just now being dragged to prison because in the spring he cut down a pine-tree in the forest which is called mine — one of the hundred thousand that grow there. Here we are, washed and dressed, having left all our uncleanness in the bedrooms for slaves to carry away. Eating, drinking, or discussing, which touches us more — Schumann or Chopin — and which of them drives away our *ennui* the more effectually.

That is what I thought on seeing you all just now, and so tell you. Just think whether it is possible to go on like that! (*Standing in great agitation.*)

LISA.

It is true — quite true.

LUBA.

Thinking as you do, life is impossible.

STEPHEN.

Why is it impossible? I don't see why we shouldn't talk about Schumann even though the peasants are poor. The one doesn't exclude the other. If men —

NICHOLAS.

(*angrily.*) If a man has no heart and is made of wood —

STEPHEN.

Well, I will be silent.

TONIA.

This problem is terrible. And it is the problem of our time. We must not be afraid of it. We must look reality in the face in order to solve it.

NICHOLAS.

There is no time to wait for the problem to be solved by concerted action. Each of us may die to-day or to-morrow. How am I to live without suffering from this inner conflict.

BORIS.

Of course the only way is not to share in the evil.

NICHOLAS.

Well, forgive me if I have hurt you. I could not help saying what I felt. (*Exit.*)

STEPHEN.

How could we avoid sharing in it? Our whole life is bound up with it.

BORIS.

That is exactly why he says that in the first place one ought not to possess property, and one's whole life should be so altered that one may serve others, and not be served by them.

TONIA.

Oh, I see you are quite on Nicholas Ivanovich's side.

BORIS.

Yes, I begin to understand for the first time; and, besides, all I saw in the village. We have only to take off the spectacles through which we are accustomed to view the life of the peasants, to see how their misery is connected with our pleasures, and there you are.

MITROFAN.

But the remedy is not to ruin our own lives.

STEPHEN.

Isn't it extraordinary how Mitrofan Ermilovich and I, standing at opposite poles, agree on some points? Those are my exact words: not to ruin our own lives.

BORIS.

It's perfectly simple. You both want a pleasant life, and so you want to adopt a plan of living that will ensure it. You (*turning to STEPHEN*) would like to preserve present conditions, and Mitrofan Ermilovich wants new ones.

(LUBA *speaks under her breath to TONIA. TONIA goes to the piano and plays a Chopin Nocturne. All are silent.*)

STEPHEN.

That is beautiful. That solves all problems.

BORIS.

It only obscures them, and delays their solution.

(During the music enter silently MARIE IVANOVNA and the PRINCESS. They sit down and listen. Before the end of the Nocturne carriage bells are heard.)

LUBA.

Oh, that is Auntie!

(Goes to meet her. Music continues. Enter ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA and a lawyer and FATHER GERASIM with his pectoral cross. All present rise.)

FATHER GERASIM.

Pray continue. It is very pleasant.

(The PRINCESS and FATHER VASILY go up to him and ask his blessing.)

ALEXANDRA.

I have done what I said I would. I found Father Gerasim and persuaded him to come with me. He is going to Kursk. So I have done my part. And here is the lawyer. He has the papers all ready to sign.

MARIE.

Would you not like to have some luncheon?

(The Lawyer lays his papers on the table and goes.)

I am very grateful to Father Gerasim.

FATHER GERASIM.

What else could I do? It was not on my way, but my Christian duty bade me come.

(PRINCESS whispers to the young people. They all talk among themselves, and go out on the veranda, except BORIS. FATHER VASILY rises to go.)

FATHER GERASIM.

Stay with us. You as a spiritual father, and the pastor here, may derive some benefit and be of use. Stay, if Marie Ivanovna does not object.

MARIE.

Oh, no. Father Vasily is like one of the family to me. I consulted him as well, but being young, he lacks authority.

FATHER GERASIM.

Undoubtedly, undoubtedly.

ALEXANDRA.

(*approaching him.*) Now, you see, Father Gerasim, you are the only one that can help us and persuade him to see reason. He is a clever man and a learned man; but you know yourself, learning can only do harm. He does not see clearly somehow. He persists in saying that the Christian command is to have no possessions. But is that possible?

FATHER GERASIM.

It is all a snare, intellectual pride, self-will. The fathers of the Church have settled that question adequately. But how did it all come about?

MARIE.

To be quite frank with you, I must say that when we married he was indifferent to religious questions, and we lived the first twenty years of our life happily. Then he began to think about these things. His sister may, perhaps, have influenced him, or his reading. But at any rate he began to think, to read the Gospel, and then all at once he became very pious, going to church, visiting monks, and then he suddenly stopped all that, and changed his life completely. Now he does everything for himself, he permits none of the servants to do anything for him, and, worst of all, he is giving away all his property.

Yesterday he gave away his forest and the land attached to it. I am afraid. I have seven children. Do talk to him. I'll go and ask whether he will see you. (*Exit.*)

FATHER GERASIM.

Yes, nowadays, many are leaving the Church. What about the property? Does it belong to him or his wife?

ALEXANDRA.

It is his own. That is the worst of it.

FATHER GERASIM.

And what is his rank.

PRINCESS.

Not a high one. I think he is a captain. He has been in the army.

FATHER GERASIM.

Many are leaving the Church nowadays. In Odessa there was a lady who became infatuated with spiritualism, and she began to do a lot of harm. But finally God prevailed, and brought her again within the Church.

PRINCESS.

Now, father, you must understand. My son is going to marry their daughter. I have given

my consent. But the girl is used to a life of luxury, and she must have means of her own so that the entire burden may not fall upon my son. I must say he works hard, and he is a remarkable young man.

(*Enter MARIE IVANOVNA and NICHOLAS IVANOVICH.*)

NICHOLAS.

How do you do, Princess? How do you do? Pardon me — I do not know your name. (*To FATHER GERASIM.*)

FATHER GERASIM.

Do you not wish for a blessing?

NICHOLAS.

No, I do not.

FATHER GERASIM.

I am Gerasim Feodorovich. Pleased to meet you.

(*Footman brings refreshments and wine.*)

It is fine weather, and very favourable for harvesting.

NICHOLAS.

I understand you have come on the invitation of Alexandra Ivanovna to convince me of my

errors, and to lead me into the right way. If that is the case, do not let us beat about the bush. Let us come to the point. I do not deny that I disagree with the teaching of the Church. I used to believe in it, but I have ceased to do so. Nevertheless, I long with my whole soul to be in harmony with the truth, and if you can show it to me, I will accept it without hesitation.

FATHER GERASIM.

How can you say you do not believe the teaching of the Church? What are we to believe if not the Church?

NICHOLAS.

God, and his law, given to us in the Gospel.

FATHER GERASIM.

The Church instructs us in that very law.

NICHOLAS.

If that were so, I would believe the Church. But the Church teaches the very opposite.

FATHER GERASIM.

The Church cannot teach the opposite, for it is founded by our Lord. It is said, "I give you the power, and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."

NICHOLAS.

That refers to something quite different. But, supposing that Christ did found a church. How do I know that it is *your* Church?

FATHER GERASIM.

Because it is said, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name —"

NICHOLAS.

That does not apply either, and does not prove anything.

FATHER GERASIM.

How can you renounce the Church, when the Church alone possesses grace?

NICHOLAS.

I did not renounce the Church until I was wholly convinced that it supports all that is contrary to Christianity.

FATHER GERASIM.

The Church cannot err, because she alone possesses the truth. Those err who leave her. The Church is sacred.

NICHOLAS.

But I have told you I do not admit that, because the Gospel says, "Ye shall know them by

their fruits." And I perceive that the Church gives her sanction to oath-taking and murder and executions.

FATHER GERASIM.

The Church admits and consecrates the powers instituted by God.

(During the conversation enter one by one LUBA, LISA, STEPHEN, TONIA, and BORIS, who sit or stand and listen.)

NICHOLAS.

I know that not only killing but anger is forbidden by the Gospel. And the Church gives its blessing to the army. The Gospel says, "Do not swear," and the Church administers oaths. The Gospel says —

FATHER GERASIM.

Excuse me — when Pilate said, "I ask you in the name of the living God," Christ accepted the oath, and said, "Yes, that I am."

NICHOLAS.

Oh, what are you saying? That is simply ridiculous!

FATHER GERASIM.

That is why the Church does not permit individuals to interpret the Gospel. She would

preserve men from error, and she cares for them as a mother for her children. She gives them an interpretation befitting the powers of their mind. No! Allow me to finish. The Church does not give her children a burden heavier than they can bear. She requires only that they fulfil the commandments. Love, do not kill, do not steal, do not commit adultery.

NICHOLAS.

Yes. Do not kill me, do not steal from me what I have stolen. We have all robbed the people, have stolen their land, and then we instituted the law against stealing. And the Church sanctions it all.

FATHER GERASIM.

That is all a snare, mere spiritual pride speaking in you. You want to show off your intellect.

NICHOLAS.

Not at all! I merely ask you, how, according to the law of Christ, am I to behave now, when I have recognised the sin of robbing the people and appropriating their land! What must I do? Go on holding my land, exploiting the labour of the starving peasants, just for *this*? (*He points to the servant who is bringing in lunch and wine.*) Or am I to give back the land to those who have been robbed by my ancestors?

THE LIGHT THAT

FATHER GERASIM.

You must act as a son of the Church should act. You have a family, children, and must bring them up as befits their station.

NICHOLAS.

Why must I?

FATHER GERASIM.

Because God has placed you in that station. And if you want to do charitable acts, then perform them by giving away part of your fortune, and by visiting the poor.

NICHOLAS.

Then why was it said that the rich man could not enter the kingdom of heaven?

FATHER GERASIM.

It was said, if he desired to be perfect.

NICHOLAS.

But I do want to be perfect. It is said in the Gospel, "Be ye perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect."

FATHER GERASIM.

But one must understand to what it applies.

NICHOLAS.

That is exactly what I am trying to understand, and all that was said in the Sermon on the Mount is simple and clear.

FATHER GERASIM.

It is all spiritual pride.

NICHOLAS.

Why pride, if it is said that what is hidden from the wise shall be revealed to babes?

FATHER GERASIM.

It will be revealed to the humble not to the proud.

NICHOLAS.

But who is proud? Is it I, who think that I am like the rest, and therefore must live like the rest, live by my labour, and in the same poverty as all my brothers, or is it they who consider themselves apart from the rest, as the priests who think they know the whole truth, and cannot err, and interpret the words of Christ to suit themselves?

FATHER GERASIM.

(*offended.*) I beg your pardon, Nicholas Ivanovich, I have not come to argue as to who is right.

I did not come to be lectured. I complied with the wish of Alexandra Ivanovna, and came to have a talk. But you appear to know everything better than I, so the conversation had better cease. But I beseech you for the last time, in the name of God, to reconsider the matter. You are terribly wrong, and will lose your own soul.

MARIE.

Won't you come and have something to eat?

FATHER GERASIM.

Thank you very much. (*Accepts.*)

(*Exit with ANNA IVANOVNA.*)

MARIE.

(*to FATHER VASILY.*) What is the result of your talk?

FATHER VASILY.

Well, my opinion is that Nicholas Ivanovich spoke truly, and Father Gerasim brought no arguments against what he said.

PRINCESS.

He was not allowed to speak. And then he did not like it. It became a sort of wordy tournament, with everybody listening. He withdrew out of modesty.

BORIS.

It was not at all from modesty. Everything he said was false, and he obviously had nothing more to say.

PRINCESS.

Oh, I see. With your usual fickleness you are beginning to agree with Nicholas Ivanovich. If those are your opinions you ought not to marry.

BORIS.

I only say that truth is truth. I cannot help saying it.

PRINCESS.

You are the last person who ought to speak like that.

BORIS.

Why?

PRINCESS.

Because you are poor, and have nothing to give away. However, the whole affair is no concern of ours. (*Exit.*)

(*After her all except NICHOLAS and MARIE IVANOVNA go out.*)

NICHOLAS.

(*sits deep in thought and smiles meditatively.*)
Masha, what is all this about? Why did you

ask that miserable, misguided man to come here? Why should that noisy woman and this priest take part in the most intimate questions of our life? Couldn't we settle all our affairs between ourselves?

MARIE.

But what can I do if you wish to leave our children with nothing? I cannot sit still and let you do that. You know it is not greed — I do not want anything for myself.

NICHOLAS.

I know, I know. I trust you. But the misfortune is that you do not believe. I don't mean that you don't believe the truth. I know you see it; but you cannot bring yourself to trust it. You do not trust the truth, and you do not trust me. You would rather trust the crowd — the princess and the rest.

MARIE.

I trust you; I have always trusted you. But when you want to make our children beggars —

NICHOLAS.

That proves that you do not trust me. Do you imagine I have not struggled and have not had fears? But now I am perfectly convinced, not only that it can be done, but must be done, and that

this is the only right thing to do for the children. You always say that if it were not for the children you would follow me. And I say that if it were not for the children you might go on living as you do. We should only be injuring ourselves. As it is we injure them.

MARIE.

But what can I do if I don't understand?

NICHOLAS.

And I — what am I to do? I know why you sent for that poor creature dressed up in his cassock and his cross, and I know why Aline brought the lawyer. You want me to transfer the estate to your name. I cannot do that. You know I have loved you during the twenty years we have been married. I love you, and I have every wish for your welfare, and that is why I cannot sign that transfer. If I am to make over the estate, then it must be to those from whom it came — the peasants. I cannot give it to you. I must give it to them. I am glad the lawyer has come. I must do it.

MARIE.

This is dreadful! Why are you so cruel? If you think it a sin to hold property, give it to me.
(*Weeps.*)

THE LIGHT THAT

NICHOLAS.

You do not know what you are saying. If I gave it to you I could not go on living with you. I should have to go away. I cannot continue to live in these conditions, and see the peasants squeezed dry, whether it is in your name or mine. I cannot see them put in prison. So choose.

MARIE.

How cruel you are! This is not Christianity; it is wicked. I cannot live as you want me to do. I cannot take things from my children to give to strangers, and for that you would forsake me! Well, go. I see that you no longer love me, and, indeed, I know the reason.

NICHOLAS.

Very well, I will sign it. But, Masha, you are asking the impossible of me. (*Goes to the table and signs.*) It is you who desired that. I cannot live so. (*Rushes away holding his head.*)

MARIE.

(*calling.*) Luba! Aline! (*They enter.*) He has signed — and gone. What am I to do? He said he would go away, and he will. Go to him.

LUBA.

He is gone.

ACT III

SCENE I

Scene is laid in Moscow. Large room, and in it a carpenter's bench, a table with papers, a book-case. Boards lean against and cover the mirror and the pictures. NICHOLAS IVANOVICH is working at the bench; a carpenter is planing.

NICHOLAS.

(taking a finished board from the bench.) Is that all right?

CARPENTER.

(adjusts the plane.) It's not up to much. Go at it! Don't be afraid. Like that.

NICHOLAS.

I wish I could, but I cannot manage it.

CARPENTER.

But why do you go in for carpentering, sir? There are so many in our trade now, you can't make a living at it.

NICHOLAS.

(continues working.) I am ashamed to live in idleness.

CARPENTER.

But that's your lot in life, sir. God has given you property.

NICHOLAS.

That is just the point. I do not believe God gave anything of the kind. Men have amassed goods that they have taken from their brothers.

CARPENTER.

(*wondering.*) That may all be very true. But still you need not work.

NICHOLAS.

I understand that it seems strange to you that in this house, where there is so much superfluity, I still wish to earn my living.

CARPENTER.

(*laughing.*) Well, that's just like you gentlemen. There's nothing you don't want to do. Now just smooth off that plank.

NICHOLAS.

Perhaps you will not believe me and will laugh at me when I say that I used to live that way and was not ashamed of it, but now that I believe the teaching of Christ that we are all brothers, I am ashamed to live that life.

CARPENTER.

If you are ashamed give away your property.

NICHOLAS.

I wanted to, but I did not succeed. I have handed it over to my wife.

A VOICE.

(*from outside.*) Father, may I come in?

NICHOLAS.

Of course you may! You may always come in.

(*Enter LUBA.*)

LUBA.

Good-morning, Yakov.

CARPENTER.

Good-morning, miss.

LUBA.

(*to her father.*) Boris has left for the regiment. I'm so afraid he will do or say something he ought not to. What do you think?

NICHOLAS.

What can I think? He will act according to his conscience.

LUBA.

But that's awful. He has only such a short time to serve now, and he may go and ruin his life.

NICHOLAS.

He did well in not coming to me. He knows I cannot tell him anything beyond what he knows himself. He told me himself that he asked for his discharge because he saw that there could not be a more lawless, cruel, brutal occupation than that which is based on murder. And that there is nothing more humiliating than to obey implicitly any man who happens to be his superior in rank. He knows all this.

LUBA.

That is precisely what I'm afraid of. He knows of all that and he'll be sure to do something.

NICHOLAS.

His conscience, that God within him, must decide that. If he had come to me I should have advised him only one thing, not to act on the dictates of reason, but only when his whole being demanded it. There's nothing worse than that. There was I, desiring to do Christ's bidding, which is to leave father, wife, children — and follow Him. And I was on the point of going.

And how did that end? It ended by my coming back and living in town, with you, in luxury. That was because I wanted to do something beyond my strength, and it ended in placing me in a stupid and humiliating position. I want to live simply — to work — and in these surroundings, with footmen and hall porters, it becomes a pose. There, I see Yakov Nikanorovich is laughing at me.

CARPENTER.

Why should I laugh? You pay me — you give me tea — I am very grateful to you.

LUBA.

Don't you think I had better go to him, father?

NICHOLAS.

My darling, I know how hard it is for you — how terrible! But you ought not to be frightened. I am a man who understands life. No harm can come of it. All that seems to you bad, really brings joy to the heart. You must understand that a man who chooses that path has had to make a choice. There are circumstances in which the scales balance evenly between God and the devil. And at that moment God's greatest work is being done. Any interference from without is very dangerous, and only brings suffering. It is as

though a man were making a great effort to bear down the scale, and the touch of a finger may break his back.

LUBA.

But why suffer?

NICHOLAS.

It is the same thing as though a mother should say, "Why suffer?" But a child cannot be born without pain. And so it is with spiritual birth. I can only say one thing—Boris is a true Christian, and therefore free. And if you cannot be like him, if you cannot believe God as he does, then believe God through him.

MARIE.

(*outside the door.*) May I come in?

NICHOLAS.

Certainly — always. Quite a meeting here to-day.

MARIE.

Our priest has come — Vasily Ermilovich. He is on his way to the bishop to resign his cure.

NICHOLAS.

Not really. Is he here? Luba, call him. He will certainly want to see me.

(*Exit LUBA.*)

MARIE.

I came to tell you about Vania. He is behaving so badly and will not study, and I am sure he will not pass. I have tried to talk to him but he is impertinent.

NICHOLAS.

Masha — you know I do not sympathise with your mode of life and your ideas of education. It is an awful question whether I have the right to look on and see my children ruined.

MARIE.

Then you must offer a definite substitute. What do you propose?

NICHOLAS.

I cannot say — I can only tell you that the first thing is to get rid of this corrupting luxury.

MARIE.

And make peasants of them! That I cannot agree to.

NICHOLAS.

Then do not ask me. All that upsets you now is inevitable.

(Enter FATHER VASILY and embraces NICHOLAS IVANOVICH.)

Then you have really done it!

THE LIGHT THAT

FATHER VASILY.

I cannot go on any longer!

NICHOLAS.

I did not expect it would come so soon.

FATHER VASILY.

It had to come. In my vocation one cannot remain indifferent. I had to confess, to administer the sacrament; how could I, knowing it to be false!

NICHOLAS.

And what will happen now?

FATHER VASILY.

I am going to the bishop to be examined. I am afraid I shall be exiled to the Solavetsky Monastery. I thought at one time of running away and going abroad, of asking you to help me, but then I gave up the idea. It would be cowardly. The only thing is — my wife —

NICHOLAS.

Where is she?

FATHER VASILY.

She has gone to her father. My mother-in-law came and took away our son. That hurt. I wanted so much — (*He stops, hardly restraining his tears.*)

NICHOLAS.

Well, God help you. Are you staying here with us?

(*Enter ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA with a letter.*)

ALEXANDRA.

A special messenger has brought this for you, Nicholas Ivanovich. How do you do, Father Vasily?

FATHER VASILY.

I am no longer Father Vasily, Alexandra Ivanovna.

ALEXANDRA.

Really? Why?

FATHER VASILY.

I have discovered that we do not believe in the right way.

ALEXANDRA.

Oh dear, oh dear, how sinful! You are a good man, but what errors you do fall into. It is all Nicholas Ivanovich's doing.

FATHER VASILY.

Not Nicholas Ivanovich's, but Christ's.

ALEXANDRA.

Oh, stop, stop! Why leave the fold of the

Orthodox Church? I know you mean well, but you are ruining your own soul.

NICHOLAS.

(*to himself.*) I expected this. What am I to do?

ALEXANDRA.

What is it?

NICHOLAS.

(*reading.*) It is from the Princess. This is what she writes: "Boris has refused to serve and has been arrested. You have been his ruin. It is your duty to save him. He is at the Kroutitsk Barracks." Yes, I must go to him, if only they will let me see him. (*He takes off his apron, puts his coat on, and goes out.*) (*Exit all.*)

SCENE II

Office. A CLERK sitting. SENTRY pacing up and down at opposite door. Enter GENERAL with his aide-de-camp. CLERK jumps up. SENTRY salutes.

GENERAL.

Where is the colonel?

CLERK.

He was asked to go to see the recruit, your excellency.

GENERAL.

Very well. Ask him to come here.

CLERK.

Yes, your excellency.

GENERAL.

What are you copying there? The deposition of the recruit?

CLERK.

Yes, your excellency.

GENERAL.

Give it to me.

(CLERK gives it and goes out.)

GENERAL.

(giving paper to AIDE-DE-CAMP.) Read it, please.

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

(reading.) "To the questions which were put to me: (1) Why I refused to take the oath; (2) Why I refused to carry out the demands of the government; and (3) what made me utter words offensive not only to the military body, but to the highest authority, I answer: to the first question: I will not take the oath because I profess the teaching of Christ. In His teaching Christ clearly forbids it, as in the Gospel, Matt. v. 33-37, and the Epistle of James, v. 12."

GENERAL.

There they are, discussing and putting their own interpretations on it.

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

(*continuing.*) "It is said in the Gospel Matt. v. 37, 'Let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil,' and James, v. 12: 'But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.'"

"But even if there were not such explicit prohibition of swearing in the Gospel, I would not swear to fulfil the will of men, for according to Christ's teaching I am bound to fulfil the will of God, which may not coincide with the will of men."

GENERAL.

There they are, discussing! If I had my way, such things would not occur.

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

(*reading.*) "And I refuse to comply with the demands of men calling themselves the government because —"

GENERAL.

What impudence!



AIDE-DE-CAMP.

"Because these demands are criminal and wicked. I am required to enter the army, to be prepared and instructed how to murder. This is forbidden by the Old as well as by the New Testament, and, moreover, by my conscience. As to the third question — "

*(Enter COLONEL with CLERK,
GENERAL shakes hands with him.)*

COLONEL.

You are reading the deposition?

GENERAL.

Yes. Unpardonably impudent Continue.

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

(reading.) "As to the third question, what induced me to speak offensively to the Council. I answer, that I was led by my desire to serve God and to denounce shams which are perpetrated in His name. This desire I hope to preserve while I live. That is why — "

GENERAL.

Oh, enough of that rubbish! The question is, how to root it all out, and prevent him from corrupting our men. *(To COLONEL.)* Have you spoken to him?

THE LIGHT THAT

COLONEL.

I have been talking to him all this time. I tried to appeal to his conscience, to make him understand that he was only making matters worse for himself and that he would not achieve anything by such methods. I spoke to him about his family. He was very excited, but he stuck to his words.

GENERAL.

It is idle to say much to him. We are soldiers; men of actions, not words. Have him brought here.

(Exit AIDE-DE-CAMP and CLERK.)

GENERAL.

(sitting down.) No, colonel. You were wrong. Such fellows must be dealt with in quite another fashion. Strong measures are needed to cut off the offending member. One foul sheep ruins the whole flock. Sentimentality has no place here. His being a prince and having a mother and a *fiancée* does not concern us. There is a soldier before us and we must fulfil the will of the Tsar.

COLONEL.

I only thought it would be easier to influence him by persuasion.

GENERAL.

Not at all. Firmness, only firmness. I had a case like this once before. He must be made to feel that he is nothing, that he is a grain of sand under the wheel of a chariot, and that he cannot impede its progress.

COLONEL.

Well, we can try.

GENERAL.

(*beginning to get angry.*) It is not a question of trying. I have nothing to try. I have served my sovereign for forty-four years, have given and am giving my life to the service, and suddenly a boy comes and wants to teach me, and quotes Bible texts. Let him talk that nonsense to the priests. To me he is either a soldier, or a prisoner. That's the end of it.

(*Enter BORIS under escort of two soldiers. AIDE-DE-CAMP follows him in.*)

GENERAL.

(*pointing to BORIS with his finger.*) Place him there.

BORIS.

No necessity whatever to "place" me anywhere. I will stand or sit where I please, for as to your authority over me, I do not —

GENERAL.

Silence! You don't recognise my authority —
I'll make you recognise it!

BORIS.

(sits down.) How wrong of you to shout like
that!

GENERAL.

Lift him up and make him stand!
(Soldiers raise BORIS up.)

BORIS.

That you can do. You can kill me, but you cannot
force me to obey you.

GENERAL.

Silence, I say! Listen to what I say to you.

BORIS.

I do not in the least wish to hear what you say.

GENERAL.

He is mad. He must be sent to the hospital
to test his sanity. That's the only thing to do
with him.

COLONEL.

We have orders to send him to the Gendarmerie
Department to be questioned.

GENERAL.

Very well — do so. But put him into uniform.

COLONEL.

He refuses to wear it.

GENERAL.

Then tie his hands and feet. (*To BORIS.*) Now listen to what I am going to tell you. It is a matter of perfect indifference to me what becomes of you. But for your own sake I would advise you to think it over. You will only rot in the fortress, and be of no use to any one. Give it up. You were excited, and so was I. (*Slapping him on the shoulder.*) Go — take your oath and drop all that nonsense. (*To the AIDE-DE-CAMP.*) Is the priest here? (*To BORIS.*) Well? (*BORIS is silent.*) Why don't you answer? I assure you I'm advising you for your own good. The weakest goes to the wall. You can keep your own ideas and merely serve your time. We won't be hard on you. Well?

BORIS.

I have nothing more to say. I have said everything.

GENERAL.

Just now you said that there were such and such verses in the Gospel. Surely the priests know

that? You'd better talk that over with the priest, and then think it over. That's surely the best way. Good-bye. I hope to meet you again and be able to congratulate you on your entrance into the service of the Tsar. Send the priest here.

(*Exit GENERAL with COLONEL and AIDE-DE-CAMP.*)

BORIS.

(*to soldiers and CLERK.*) You see how they talk. They are perfectly aware themselves that they are deceiving you. Don't give in to them. Throw down your arms. Go away. Let them flog you to death in their disciplinary battalions. Even that is better than to be the slaves of these impostors!

CLERK.

No, that's impossible. How can we get on without the army? It is impossible.

BORIS.

We must not reason in that way. We must do just as God desires. And God desires us to —

SOLDIER.

Then why do they call it the "Christ-serving Army?"

BORIS.

That is not said anywhere. It's the invention of these impostors.

SOLDIER.

How so? The bishops must know.

(Enter POLICE OFFICER with Stenographer.)

POLICE OFFICER.

(to CLERK.) Is Prince Cheremshanov the recruit here?

CLERK.

Yes, sir. There he is.

POLICE OFFICER.

Please step this way. Are you the Prince Boris Cheremshanov who refused to take the oath?

BORIS.

I am he.

(Officer sits down and motions to a seat opposite.)

POLICE OFFICER.

Please sit down.

BORIS.

I think there's no use in our talking.

POLICE OFFICER.

I don't agree. To you at any rate it may be

of advantage. You see, I have been informed that you refused military service and refused to take the oath, which raises the suspicion that you belong to the revolutionary party. And this I have to investigate. If this is true, then we must remove you from military service and either put you in prison or exile you, according to the extent of your participation in the revolutionary movement. Otherwise we leave you to the military authorities. Please note that I have told you everything quite frankly, and I trust you will show the same confidence in talking to us.

BORIS.

In the first place I cannot have any confidence in those who wear that (*pointing to the uniform.*) In the second place your very office is of such a nature that I cannot respect it, but, on the contrary, despise it from my heart. But I will not refuse to answer your questions. What is it you want to know?

POLICE OFFICER.

First, please, your name, rank, and religious faith.

BORIS.

You know all that, so that I will not answer. Only one of those questions is of any importance

to me. I do *not* belong to the so-called Orthodox Church.

POLICE OFFICER.

Then what is your religion?

BORIS.

I cannot define it.

POLICE OFFICER.

Still —

BORIS.

Let us say Christian, founded on the Sermon on the Mount.

POLICE OFFICER.

Take that down.

(Stenographer writes.)

POLICE OFFICER.

(to BORIS.) But you acknowledge that you belong to some state, some class?

BORIS.

I do not admit that. I consider myself a man, a servant of God.

POLICE OFFICER.

But why do you not recognise your allegiance to the Russian State?

BORIS.

Because I do not recognise the existence of any State.

POLICE OFFICER.

What do you mean — when you say you do not recognise it? Do you want to destroy it?

BORIS.

Most certainly I do, and I work to that end.

POLICE OFFICER.

(to SCRIBE.) Take that down. (To BORIS.)
By what means do you work?

BORIS.

By denouncing deceit and lies, and by spreading the truth. Just now, the moment before you entered, I was telling these soldiers that they must not believe the deceit in which they are made to share.

POLICE OFFICER.

But beside these measures of denunciation and proselytising, do you admit other means?

BORIS.

I not only exclude violence, but I consider it the greatest sin, and all underhand actions also.

POLICE OFFICER.

(to SCRIBE.) Take it down. Very good. Now allow me to ask you about your acquaintances, your friends. Do you know Ivashenkov?

BORIS.

No.

POLICE OFFICER.

And Klein?

BORIS.

I have heard of him, but I have never seen him.

(*Enter* CHAPLAIN.)

POLICE OFFICER.

Well, I think that is all. I consider that you are not a dangerous person. You do not concern our department. I hope you will soon be released. Good-day. (*Shakes hands.*)

BORIS.

There is one thing I should like to say to you. Excuse me, but I cannot resist saying it. Why have you chosen such a bad and wicked calling? I would advise you to leave it.

POLICE OFFICER.

(*smiling.*) Thank you for your advice: I have my reasons. Now, father, I'll give up my place to you.

(*The priest, an old man with cross and Testament, steps forward. The SCRIBE advances to receive his blessing.*)

CHAPLAIN.

(to BORIS.) Why do you grieve your superiors and refuse to perform the duty of a Christian by serving your Tsar and country?

BORIS.

(*smiling.*) It is precisely because I wish to perform the duties of a Christian that I do not wish to be a soldier.

CHAPLAIN.

Why do you not wish it? It is written, "Lay down your life for your friends." That is the part of a true Christian.

BORIS.

Yes, to lay down your own, but not take the life of others. To give up my life is just what I wish.

CHAPLAIN.

You judge wrongly, young man. And what did Jesus Christ say to the soldiers?

BORIS.

(*smiling.*) That only proves that even in His time soldiers plundered, and He forbade them to do so.

CHAPLAIN.

Well — why do you refuse to take the oath?

BORIS.

You know it is forbidden in the Gospel.

CHAPLAIN.

Not at all. How was it that when Pilate said, "In the name of God I ask you, are you the Christ?" Our Lord Jesus Christ answered, "I am He." That proves an oath is not forbidden.

BORIS.

Are you not ashamed to say that, you, an old man?

CHAPLAIN.

I advise you not to be obstinate. It is not for us to change the world. Take the oath, and have done with it. As for what is sin and what is not sin, leave that for the Church to decide.

BORIS.

Leave it to you? Are you not afraid to take such a weight of sin upon your soul?

CHAPLAIN.

What sin? I have always been true to the faith in which I was educated. I have been a priest now for over thirty years; there can be no sin upon my soul.

BORIS.

Then whose is the sin of deceiving so many

people? You know what *their* heads are full of.
(*Points to the sentry.*)

CHAPLAIN.

That, young man, is not for us to judge. Our duty is to obey our superiors.

BORIS.

Leave me alone. I pity you, and what you say disgusts me. If you were like that general it would not be so bad. But you come with cross and Bible to try to persuade me in the name of Christ to deny Christ. Go — go! (*Excitedly.*) Go. Take me away where I shall see no one. I am tired — I am terribly tired.

CHAPLAIN.

Well, good-bye.

(*Enter AIDE-DE-CAMP. BORIS retires to back of scene.*)

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

Well?

CHAPLAIN.

Great stubbornness. Great insubordination.

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

He has not consented to take the oath and to serve?

CHAPLAIN.

Not in the least.

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

Then I shall have to take him to the hospital.

CHAPLAIN.

To make out that he is ill. Of course that's the best way; otherwise his example might be bad for the rest.

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

He will be examined in the ward for mental ailments. These are my orders.

CHAPLAIN.

Of course. Good-day. (*Exit.*)

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

(*approaching Boris.*) Please come with me. I am ordered to escort you.

BORIS.

Where to?

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

Just for a time, to the hospital, where you will be more comfortable, and will have leisure to think the matter over.

BORIS.

I have thought it over for some time. But let us go. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE III

Reception-room in the Hospital.

(HEAD PHYSICIAN *and* HOUSE
SURGEON *and* PATIENTS *in hospi-
tal dress.* WARDERS *in blouses.*)

SICK OFFICER.

I tell you, you simply make me worse. There were times when I felt quite well.

HEAD PHYSICIAN.

Don't get so excited. I am quite willing to discharge you, but you know yourself that it is unsafe for you to be at liberty. If I knew that you would be taken care of —

SICK OFFICER.

You think I shall begin to drink again. Oh no! I've learned my lesson. Every additional day spent here is simply killing me. You do just the contrary to what (*over excited*) should be done. You are cruel. It is all very well for you —

HEAD PHYSICIAN.

Calm yourself. (*Makes a sign to WARDERS who approach the OFFICER from behind.*)

SICK OFFICER.

It's all very well for you to talk when you are free. But how do you think I feel here in the company of lunatics? (*To* WARDERS.) Why are you coming so near to me? Get away?

HEAD PHYSICIAN.

I beg you to be calm.

SICK OFFICER.

And I beg, I insist on my discharge. (*Shrieks, rushes at doctor.* WARDERS *seize him — a struggle — they lead him away.*)

HOUSE SURGEON.

Same thing all over again. He was on the point of striking you.

HEAD PHYSICIAN

Alcoholic subject, and there's nothing to be done for him. Still there is some improvement.

(*Enter AIDE-DE-CAMP.*)

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

Good morning.

HEAD PHYSICIAN.

Good morning.

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

I have brought you a very interesting case. A certain Prince Cheremshanov was to do his military service, and refused on the ground of the Gospel. He was handed over to the police, but they found him outside their jurisdiction, and decided it was not a political case. The chaplain talked to him, but without the slightest effect.

HEAD PHYSICIAN.

(*laughing.*) And as usual you bring him to us as the last resort. Well, let's have a look at him.

(*Exit HOUSE SURGEON.*)

AIDE-DE-CAMP.

They say he is a well-educated fellow, and that he's engaged to a rich girl. It is very strange. I must say the hospital is exactly the right place for him.

HEAD PHYSICIAN.

It must be a case of mania —

(*BORIS is brought in.*)

Good morning. Please sit down. We'll have a little talk. (*To the others.*) Leave us alone.

(*Exeunt all save BORIS and PHYSICIAN.*)

BORIS.

I would like to ask you, if you are going to shut me up somewhere, to do it as quickly as possible and let me have a rest.

HEAD PHYSICIAN.

Excuse me: I must comply with the regulations. I will merely put a few questions to you. How do you feel? From what are you suffering?

BORIS.

There's nothing the matter with me. I am perfectly well.

HEAD PHYSICIAN.

Yes; but your conduct is different from the conduct of others.

BORIS.

I am acting according to the dictates of my conscience.

HEAD PHYSICIAN.

You have refused to perform your military duty. What is your motive?

BORIS.

I am a Christian, and therefore cannot kill.

HEAD PHYSICIAN.

But is it not necessary to protect the country

from foreign enemies, and restrain from evil those who disturb the peace within?

BORIS.

The country is not attacked by any enemies, and as for disturbers of the peace within her borders, there are more of those within the Government than among the people towards whom the Government uses violence.

HEAD PHYSICIAN.

What do you mean by that?

BORIS.

I mean that the chief cause of evil — alcohol — is sold by the Government; a false religious creed is spread by the Government; and the very military service, such as I am required to perform, and which is the principal means of corruption in the country, is required by the Government.

HEAD PHYSICIAN.

Then, according to your views, Government and State are unnecessary.

BORIS.

I do not know; but I am quite sure I must not participate in these evils.

HEAD PHYSICIAN.

But what will become of the world? We are given a mind with which to look ahead.

BORIS.

Yes, and we are also given common sense to see that the organisation of society shall not be founded on violence, but on love, and that the refusal of one man to participate in evil has nothing dangerous in it —

HEAD PHYSICIAN.

Now please let me make an examination. Will you kindly lie down? (*Begins to examine him.*) Do you feel any pain here?

BORIS.

No.

HEAD PHYSICIAN.

Nor here?

BORIS.

No.

HEAD PHYSICIAN.

Breathe. Now don't breathe. Thank you. Now allow me. (*Takes out a measure and measures his nose and his forehead.*) Now be so kind as to shut your eyes and walk.

BORIS.

Aren't you ashamed to do all that?

HEAD PHYSICIAN.

What?

BORIS.

All these silly things. You know perfectly well that I'm all right, and have been sent here for refusing to take part in their wickedness, and as they had no arguments to offer in opposition to my truth, they pretend that they think me abnormal. And you aid them in that! That is despicable and disgraceful. You'd better stop it.

HEAD PHYSICIAN.

Then you do not wish to walk?

BORIS.

No, I do not. You may torment me as much as you like. That is your business. But I do not wish to help you in it. (*Vehemently.*) Stop it, I say!

(HEAD PHYSICIAN *presses a button.* Two WARDERS *enter.*)

HEAD PHYSICIAN.

Be calm, please. I quite understand that your

nerves are rather over-strained. Would you not like to go to your quarters?

(*Enter HOUSE SURGEON.*)

HOUSE SURGEON.

Visitors have come for Cheremshanov.

BORIS.

Who are they?

HOUSE SURGEON.

Sarintsev and his daughter.

BORIS.

I should like to see them.

HEAD PHYSICIAN.

I have no objection. Ask them in. You may receive them here.

(*Enter NICHOLAS IVANOVICH and LUBA. PRINCESS CHEREMSHANOVA puts her head into the door, saying, "Go in, I'll come later."*)

LUBA.

(*goes straight to BORIS, takes his face between her hands, and kisses him.*) Poor Boris!

BORIS.

No, don't pity me. I feel so well — so happy.

I am so easy in my mind. (*To* NICHOLAS IVANOVICH.) How do you do? (*Embraces him.*)

NICHOLAS.

I came to tell you something important. In the first place, it is worse in such cases to overdo it than to do too little; in the second place, you must act according to the Gospel, taking no thought as to your future words and acts. When taken before the authorities "think not what ye shall say, for the Holy Ghost will teach you in that hour what ye ought to say." The moment to act is not when your reason dictates this or that, but only when your whole being determines your action.

BORIS.

That's just what I did. I did not think I should refuse to serve. But when I saw all this falsehood, the emblem of justice, the documents, the police, and the members of the Council smoking — I could not help speaking as I did. It seemed a terrible thing to do, but only till I began. Then all became so simple and delightful.

(LUBA *sits weeping.*)

NICHOLAS.

Above all, do nothing for the sake of the praise of men, or in order to please those whose esteem

you value. As for myself, I tell you honestly that if you took the oath this moment and entered the army, I would love and respect you no less; possibly even more than before, because it is not what is done in the world that is of value, but what is done within the soul.

BORIS.

That is certainly so, because if a thing is done within the soul, it will bring about a change in the world.

NICHOLAS.

Well, I have said what I had to say. Your mother is here, and she is quite broken-hearted. If you can do what she desires, do it. That is what I wanted to tell you.

(In the corridor frightful screaming of the lunatics. One lunatic bursts into the room. WARDERS follow and drag him away.)

LUBA

This is dreadful! And you will have to be here! (*Weeps.*)

BORIS.

This doesn't frighten me. Nothing frightens me now. I feel at peace. The only thing that I

fear is your attitude to all this. Help me — I'm sure you will help me.

LUBA.

How can I be glad?

NICHOLAS.

Be glad. That is impossible. Neither am I glad. I suffer for him and would willingly take his place. But I am suffering, and yet I know that it is for the best.

LUBA.

For the best! When will they let him go?

BORIS.

No one knows. I am not thinking about the future; the present is joyful. And you could make it still more so.

(*Enter PRINCESS.*)

PRINCESS.

I can wait no longer. (*To NICHOLAS IVANOVICH.*) Well, have you persuaded him? Are you willing, Boris darling? You must know how I have suffered. Thirty years of my life have been given to you. To bring you up and be so proud of you, and then when all is ready and finished, suddenly to give up everything. Prison, disgrace! No, Boris —

BORIS.

Listen, mother.

PRINCESS.

(to NICHOLAS IVANOVICH.) Why don't you say something? You have brought about his ruin, and you ought to persuade him. It's all very well for you. Luba, speak to him!

LUBA.

What can I do?

BORIS.

Mother, try to understand that some things are impossible. Just as it is impossible to fly, so it is impossible for me to serve in the army.

PRINCESS.

You only imagine you cannot! It's all nonsense. Others have served, and are serving now. You and Nicholas Ivanovich have invented a new Christian creed that is not Christian at all. It is a diabolical creed, that causes suffering to every one around you.

BORIS.

So it is written in the Gospel.

PRINCESS.

Nothing of that sort is said. And if it is, it's

simply stupid. Boris darling, spare me! (*Falls on his neck and sobs.*) My whole life has been full of sorrow. You have been my only gleam of gladness, and now you turn it into anguish. Boris, have pity!

BORIS.

It is very, very painful to me, mother, but I cannot promise you that.

PRINCESS.

Do not refuse. Say you will try!

NICHOLAS.

Say you will think it over, and do think it over.

BORIS.

Very well — I will do that. But have pity on me, also, mother. It is hard for me too.

(*Again desperate screams in a corridor.*)

I am in a lunatic asylum, you see, and I may lose my reason.

(*Enter HEAD PHYSICIAN.*)

HEAD PHYSICIAN.

Madame, this may have the worst results. Your son is in a very excited state. I think we had better consider the visit at an end. The regular visiting day is Thursday before twelve.

PRINCESS.

Well, well, I will go. Good-bye, Boris. Only do think it over. Spare me, and on Thursday meet me with good news. (*Kisses him.*)

NICHOLAS.

(*shaking hands with him.*) Think it over, with God's help, as if to-morrow you were going to die. That is the only way to make the right decision. Good-bye.

BORIS.

(*approaching LUBA.*) What are you going to say to me?

LUBA.

What can I say? I cannot be untruthful. I do not understand why you torture yourself and others. I do not understand, and there is nothing I can say. (*Weeps.*)

(*They all go.*)

BORIS.

(*alone.*) Oh, how difficult, how difficult it is! God help me!

(*Enter WARDERS with hospital attire.*)

WARDER.

Will you please put this on?

BORIS.

(*begins to change—then.*) No, I will not!

(*They change his garments by force.*)

ACT IV

SCENE I

Moscow. A year has passed since the third act. Big drawing-room with piano arranged for dancing party in Sarintsev's house. Footman arranges flowers in front of piano. A Christmas tree.

(Enter MARIE IVANOVNA in elegant silk dress, with ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA.)

MARIE.

It isn't a ball. It is only a small dance. A party, as we used to say, for the young people. I can't let my children go out to dances and never give a party myself.

ALEXANDRA.

I'm afraid Nicholas will be displeased.

MARIE.

What can I do? *(To FOOTMAN.)* Put it here. Heaven knows I do not want to grieve him. But I think he is less exacting now, on the whole.

ALEXANDRA.

Oh no! Only he does not talk about it. He seemed quite upset when he went to his room after dinner.

MARIE.

But what is to be done? what is to be done? We must all live. There are six children, and if I did not provide some amusement for them at home, Heaven knows what they would do. At any rate, I am happy about Luba.

ALEXANDRA.

Has he proposed?

MARIE.

Practically. He has spoken to her and she has accepted him.

ALEXANDRA.

That will be another awful blow for him.

MARIE.

But he knows. He cannot help knowing.

ALEXANDRA.

He does not like him.

MARIE.

(to FOOTMAN.) Put the fruit on the side-board. Whom do you mean? Alexis Mikhailovich?

Of course not, for he is the embodied negation of all his theories — a man of the world, nice, kind, agreeable. Oh, that awful nightmare of Boris Cheremshanov! How is he now?

ALEXANDRA.

Lisa has been to see him. He's still there. She says he has grown very thin, and the doctors are anxious about his life or reason.

MARIE.

He is a victim of his dreadful theories. His life ruined — to what end? It certainly was not my wish.

(*Enter PIANIST.*)

You have come to play for the dancing?

PIANIST.

Yes, I am the pianist.

MARIE.

Please sit down and wait. Will you have some tea?

PIANIST.

No, thank you. (*Goes to piano.*)

MARIE.

I never wished it. I was fond of Boris. But

of course he was no match for Luba, especially after taking up with Nicholas's ideas.

ALEXANDRA.

Still, his strength of conviction is extraordinary. What agony he has been through! They tell him that if he will not give in he must stay where he is or else be sent to the fortress, and he gives them but one answer. And Lisa says he's so happy, even merry.

MARIE.

Fanatic! Oh, there's Alexis Mikhailovich!

(Enter the brilliant ALEXIS MIKHAILOVICH STARKOVSKY in evening dress.)

STARKOVSKY.

I have come early. *(Kisses the hands of both ladies.)*

MARIE.

So much the better.

STARKOVSKY.

And Lubov Nicolaevna? She said she was going to dance a lot to make up for what she had missed. I volunteered to help her.

MARIE.

She is arranging the favours for the cotillion.

STARKOVSKY.

I'll go and help her. May I?

MARIE.

Certainly.

(STARKOVSKY *turns to go, and meets LUBA coming toward him carrying a cushion on which are stars and ribbons. LUBA in evening dress, not low-necked.*)

LUBA.

Oh, there you are! That's right. Do help me. There are two more cushions in the drawing-room, bring them here. How do you do! How do you do!

STARKOVSKY.

I am off! (*Goes.*)

MARIE.

(*to LUBA.*) Listen, Luba. To-night our guests are sure to make insinuations and ask questions. May we announce it?

LUBA.

No, mother, no. Why? Let them ask. It would grieve father.

MARIE.

But he must know, or at least guess. And we

shall have to tell him sooner or later. I really think it is best to announce it to-night. It is a farcical secret.

LUBA.

No, no, mother — please! It would spoil the whole evening. No, don't!

MARIE.

Very well, as you like.

LUBA.

Or, anyhow, not till the end of the evening, just before supper. (*Calling out.*) Well, are you bringing them?

MARIE.

I will go and see to Natasha.

(*Exit with ANNA IVANOVNA.*)

STARKOVSKY.

(*brings three cushions, the top one under his chin, and lets something drop.*) Don't you trouble, Lubov Nicolaevna. I'll pick them up. I say, what a lot of favours you've got! The thing is to distribute them properly! Vania, come here.

(*Enter VANIA, carrying more favours.*)

VANIA.

That's the last of them. Luba, Alexis Mikhailovich and I have got a bet on as to who will get most favours.

STARKOVSKY.

It's very easy for you. You know everybody, so you are sure of theirs in advance. I must win the girls before I can get any favours at all. So I have a handicap of forty points, you see.

VANIA.

But you are grown up, and I'm only a boy.

STARKOVSKY.

I'm not very grown up, and so I am worse than a boy.

LUBA.

Vania, please go to my room and bring me the paste and my needle-case; they're on the shelf. But for mercy's sake don't break the watch there.

VANIA.

(*running off.*) I'll break everything.

STARKOVSKY.

(*takes LUBA's hand.*) May I, Luba? I am so happy. (*Kisses her hand.*) The mazurka is mine, but that isn't enough. There isn't time in

the mazurka to say much, and I have a great deal to say. May I telegraph to my people and tell them you have accepted me and how happy I am?

LUBA.

Yes, you can do it to-night.

STARKOVSKY.

One word more. How will Nicholas Ivanovich take the news? Have you told him? Have you told him? Yes?

LUBA.

No, I have not, but I will. He will take it just as he takes everything now that concerns his family. He will say, "Do as you like." But in his heart he will be grieved.

STARKOVSKY.

Because I am not Cheremshanov — because I am a chamberlain, a marshal of nobility?

LUBA.

Yes. But I have tried to fight against myself — to deceive myself for his sake. And it is not because I do not love him that I do not follow his wishes, but because I cannot act a lie. And he says himself that one should not. I long to live my own life!

STARKOVSKY.

Life is the only truth there is. What has become of Cheremshanov?

LUBA.

(*agitated.*) Do not talk to me about him. I want to find fault with him even when he is suffering. I know it is because I am to blame about him. But one thing I do know: that there is such a thing as love—real love—and that I never had for him.

STARKOVSKY.

Do you really mean it, Luba?

LUBA.

You want me to say that it is you that I love with a real love? I will not say that. I certainly love you. . . . But it is a different kind of love. Neither of them is the real thing. If I could only put them both together. . . .

STARKOVSKY.

Oh no, I'm quite content with mine. (*Kisses her hand.*) Luba!

LUBA.

(*moving from him.*) No; we must talk this over. You see, the guests are beginning to arrive.

SHINES IN DARKNESS

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*(Enter COUNTESS with TONIA
and a younger girl.)*

Mother will be here directly.

COUNTESS.

We are the first then?

STARKOVSKY.

Somebody must be first. I offered to make an india-rubber lady to be the first arrival.

*(Enter STEPHEN with VANIA,
who brings the paste and needles.)*

STEPHEN.

(to TONIA.) I hoped to see you last night at the Italian opera.

TONIA.

We were at my aunt's, sewing for the poor.

*(Enter STUDENTS, LADIES, and
MARIE IVANOVNA.)*

COUNTESS.

(to MARIE IVANOVNA.) Shall we not see Nicholas Ivanovich?

MARIE.

No; he never leaves his rooms.

STEPHEN.

How did Cheremshanov's affair end?

MARIE.

He is still in the asylum, poor boy.

COUNTESS.

What obstinacy!

ONE OF THE GUESTS.

What an extraordinary delusion! What good can come of it?

STUDENT.

Take your partners for the quadrille, please!

(Claps his hands. They take up their positions and dance. Enter ALEXANDRA IVANOVNA, and walks up to her sister.)

ALEXANDRA.

He is frightfully excited. He has been to see Boris, and on returning he saw the dancing going on. He wants to go away. I went up to his door, and heard his conversation with Alexander Petrovich.

MARIE.

What did they say?

VOICE FROM THE DANCE.

Rond des dames. Les cavaliers en avant.

ALEXANDRA.

He has made up his mind that he cannot possibly continue to live here, and he is going away.

MARIE.

What a torment that man is!

(*Exit MARIE IVANOVNA.*)

SCENE II

NICHOLAS IVANOVICH'S room. *Music is heard from afar. He has his coat on, and puts a letter on the table. With him is a tramp, ALEXANDER PETROVICH, in rags.*

ALEXANDER.

Don't be uneasy. We can get to the Caucasus without a penny; and when we are once there you can arrange matters.

NICHOLAS.

We will take the train to Tula, and then we will go on foot. Now, we're ready. (*Puts the letter in the middle of the table, and goes towards the door. Meets MARIE IVANOVNA, who enters.*)

NICHOLAS.

What have you come for?

THE LIGHT THAT

MARIE.

To see what you are doing.

NICHOLAS.

I am suffering terribly.

MARIE.

What have I come for? Not to let you do a cruel thing. Why do you do it? What have I done?

NICHOLAS.

Why? Because I cannot go on living like this; I cannot endure this horrible life of depravity!

MARIE.

But this is awful. You call my life, which I devote to you and to the children, depraved! (*Noticing the presence of ALEXANDER PETROVICH.*) *Renvoyez au moins cet homme. Je ne veux pas qu'il soit témoin de cette conversation.*

ALEXANDER.

(*in broken French.*) *Comprenez toujours moi parté.*

NICHOLAS.

Wait for me outside, Alexander Petrovich. I will come directly.

(*Exit ALEXANDER PETROVICH.*)

MARIE.

What can you have in common with that man? Why he is more to you than your wife passes all comprehension. Where do you intend to go?

NICHOLAS.

I was leaving a letter for you. I did not want to talk about it. It is too painful. But if you wish I will try to tell you calmly what is in it.

MARIE.

No; I absolutely cannot understand why you hate and punish the wife who has given up everything for you. Can you say that I go out into society, that I love dress or flirtations? No! my whole life has been devoted to my family. I nursed all my children myself; I brought them up myself; and during these last years the whole burden of their education and all the management of our affairs has fallen on me.

NICHOLAS.

(interrupting.) But all the weight of that burden is due to your refusal to lead the life I proposed.

MARIE.

But what you proposed was impossible. Ask anybody! I could not let the children grow up

illiterate, as you desired; and I could not do the cooking and the washing with my own hands.

NICHOLAS.

I never asked you to.

MARIE.

Well, something very like it. You call yourself a Christian, and you want to do good in the world. You say you love humanity. Then why do you torment the woman who has given her whole life to you?

NICHOLAS.

In what way am I tormenting you? I love you, but —

MARIE.

Is it not tormenting me to leave me and to go away? What will all the world say? One of the two — either that I am a bad, wicked woman, or that you are mad.

NICHOLAS.

Let them say I am mad then. I cannot live like this.

MARIE.

Why is it so terrible that I should give a party? — the only one during the whole season, for fear of grieving you? I only did it because every one

said it was a necessity. Ask Mary, ask Varvara Vasilievna. You treat this as a crime, and make me suffer disgrace for it. It is not so much the disgrace I mind. The worst of it is that you do not love me—you love the whole world, even that drunkard Alexander Petrovich. . . . But I still love you—I cannot live without you. What have I done? what have I done? (*She weeps.*)

NICHOLAS.

You will not understand my life — my spiritual life.

MARIE.

I do want to, but I can't. I only see that your idea of Christianity makes you hate your family, and hate me. Why, I do not understand.

NICHOLAS.

But others understand.

MARIE.

Who? Alexander Petrovich, who gets money from you?

NICHOLAS.

He and Ermilovich, Tonia, and Vasily. But that is immaterial. If no one understood, it would alter nothing.

MARIE.

Vasily Ermilovich has repented, and has re-

turned to his parish, and at this very moment Tonia is dancing and flirting with Stephen.

NICHOLAS.

I am very sorry. But this cannot make black white, nor can it change my life. Masha, you do not need me — let me go! I have tried to take part in your life — to bring into it the thing that is life to me — but it cannot be done. The only result is that I torture both you and myself; and it is not only torture to me, but it ruins everything I attempt. Everybody — even that very Alexander Petrovich — has the right to say, and does say, that I am an impostor: that I say one thing and do another; that I preach the poverty of Christ and live in luxury, under cover of having given everything to my wife.

MARIE.

Then you are ashamed of yourself before the world? Are you not above that?

NICHOLAS.

It is not that I am ashamed of myself — though I certainly am — but that I am hindering the work of God.

MARIE.

You say yourself that the work of God goes on

in spite of all opposition. But leaving that aside, tell me what you want me to do.

NICHOLAS.

I have told you.

MARIE.

But, Nicholas, you know that that is impossible. Think of it. Luba is just going to be married, Vania has entered the university, and Missie and Katia are at school: how could I interrupt all that?

NICHOLAS.

But I? What am I to do?

MARIE.

Practise what you preach: endure and love. Is that so difficult? Only put up with us — do not deprive us of yourself! What is it that distresses you so?

(VANIA *rushes in.*)

VANIA.

Mother, you are wanted.

MARIE.

Say I can't come. Go; go away.

VANIA.

Please come!

(*Exit.*)

NICHOLAS.

You will not see my point of view, and understand me.

MARIE.

I only wish I could.

NICHOLAS.

No, you do not wish to understand; and we are growing further and further apart. Put yourself in my place for a moment and think, and you will understand. In the first place, life here is depraved — such words anger you, but I can use no other when speaking of a life founded on robbery — because the money you live on comes from the land you have stolen from the people. Besides, I see how the children are being corrupted by it. “Woe to him who offends one of these little ones!” — and before my very eyes I see my children ruined and corrupted. Nor can I bear to see grown men dressed up in swallow-tailed coats serving us as though they were slaves. Every meal is a misery.

MARIE.

But it has always been so. It is so in all houses — abroad and everywhere.

NICHOLAS.

Since I have realised that we are all brothers, I cannot look on without pain.

MARIE.

It is your own fault. One can imagine anything.

NICHOLAS.

(*hotly.*) This want of understanding is awful. To-day I spent the morning among the scavengers in the Rijánov Night Lodgings. I saw a child dying of starvation; a boy that had become a drunkard; a consumptive laundress going to rinse her linen in the river: and I come home and a footman in a white tie opens my front door to me. I hear my son, a young boy, tell that footman to bring him a glass of water, and I see a regiment of servants that work for us. Then I go to Boris who is giving up his life for the truth, and I see this pure, strong, resolute man deliberately driven to madness and to death in order that they may get rid of him. I know, and they know, that he has organic heart trouble; and they provoke him, and then put him among raving maniacs! Oh, it is awful! And now I return home to learn that my daughter — the only one of my family who understood not me, but the truth — has

thrown over both the truth and the man she was engaged to, and had promised to love, and is going to marry a flunkey — a liar.

MARIE.

What a very Christian sentiment!

NICHOLAS.

Yes, it is wrong. I am to blame. But I want you to enter into my feeling. I only say that she has repudiated the truth.

MARIE.

You say the truth. The rest, the majority, say error. Vasily Ermilovich thought he had gone astray, but now he returned to the Church.

NICHOLAS.

It is impossible.

MARIE.

He wrote all about it to Lisa, and she will show you the letter. These things do not last. It's the same with Tonia, not to mention Alexander Petrovich, who simply finds it profitable.

NICHOLAS.

(*getting angry.*) That is immaterial. I only want you to understand me. I still consider that truth remains truth. It is painful to me to come

home and see a Christmas tree, a ball, hundreds squandered when others are dying of hunger. I can *not* live like this! Have mercy on me! I am worn out. Let me go! Good-bye.

MARIE.

If you go, I go with you; and if not with you, I will throw myself under your train. Let them all perish — all — Missie — Katia — all of them. My God, my God, what anguish! Why is it?
(*Sobbing.*)

NICHOLAS.

(*calling at the door.*) Alexander Petrovich! Go. I shall not go with you. I shall stay.
(*Takes off his coat.*)

MARIE.

We have not much longer to live. Do not let us spoil our life after twenty-eight years together. I will not give any more parties, but do not pain me so!

(VANIA and KATIA rush in.)

BOTH.

Mother, come quick!

MARIE.

I'm coming — I'm coming! Then let us forgive each other.

(*Exeunt MARIE IVANOVNA and CHILDREN.*)

NICHOLAS.

(*alone.*) A child — a perfect child! Or — a cunning woman! Ah, yes — a cunning child. That is it! O Thou dost not desire me for Thy servant. Thou wouldest humiliate me that all should point at me and say, "He talks but he does not act." I submit. He knows best what He desires. Humility, simplicity. Oh! if I could only raise myself to Him. (*Enter LISA.*)

LISA.

Excuse me: I came to bring you a letter from Vasily Ermilovich. It was written to me, but he wanted me to tell you about it.

NICHOLAS.

Is it really true then?

LISA.

Yes. Read what he says.

NICHOLAS.

Will you read it to me?

LISA.

(*reading.*) "I am writing to ask you to communicate this to Nicholas Ivanovich. I profoundly regret the error which made me openly renounce the Holy Orthodox Church, and I re-

joice in my return. I wish the same for you and for Nicholas Ivanovich, and I ask your forgiveness."

NICHOLAS.

They have driven the poor man to this, but still it is terrible.

LISA.

I wanted to tell you also that the Princess has come. She came into my room in a terrible state of excitement, and says she must see you. She has just come from Boris. I think you had better not see her. What good could it do?

NICHOLAS.

No, call her in. Evidently this is to be a terrible day of trial.

LISA.

Then I'll call her. (*Exit.*)

NICHOLAS.

(*alone.*) Oh, just to remember that life consists in serving Thee! To remember that if Thou sendest trials to me, it is that Thou thinkest that I am able to bear them; that they are not above my strength, otherwise it would not be a trial. Father, help me — help me to do Thy will, and not my own.

(*Enter PRINCESS.*)

THE LIGHT THAT

PRINCESS.

Oh, so you have admitted me—you have deigned to receive me. I will not shake your hand, because I hate and despise you.

NICHOLAS.

What has happened?

PRINCESS.

Just this! He is being transferred to the disciplinary battalion, and it is your doing.

NICHOLAS.

Princess, if you want anything, tell me what it is. If you have only come to abuse me, you are merely doing yourself harm. As for me, you cannot offend me, because I sympathise with you, and pity you with all my soul.

PRINCESS.

How charitable! Sublime Christianity! No, Monsieur Sarintsev, you cannot deceive me. I know you now. It is nothing to you that you have ruined my son, and here you are giving balls. Your daughter, who is engaged to my son, is about to make a match of which you approve, while you pretend to lead the simple life—you play at carpentering. How hateful you are to me, with your pharisaical life!

NICHOLAS.

Calm yourself, Princess, and tell me what you want. You have not come simply to abuse me.

PRINCESS.

Yes, partly. I had to pour out my anguish. What I want of you is this: they are sending him to the disciplinary battalion, and I cannot bear that. And it is you who have done it — you — you — you!

NICHOLAS.

Not I — God has done it. And God knows how I pity you. Do not set yourself in opposition to the will of God. He is testing you. Bear it humbly.

PRINCESS.

I cannot bear it humbly. My son is all the world to me, and you have taken him from me and have ruined him. I cannot accept it quietly. I have come to you, and I tell you again, and for the last time, that you have brought about his ruin, and you must save him. Go and obtain his release — go to the authorities, to the Tsar, to whomever you will. It is your duty. If you will not, I know what I shall do. You will answer to me for what you have done.

THE LIGHT THAT

NICHOLAS.

Tell me what I am to do. I am willing to do all I can.

PRINCESS.

I repeat once more, you must save him. If you do not — remember. Good-bye. (*Exit.*)

(*NICHOLAS lies down on the sofa. Silence. Pause. Music of "Grossvater's Tanz" is distinctly heard.*)

STEPHEN.

Father isn't here. Come on.

(*Enter chain of dancers, adults and children.*)

LUBA.

(*seeing her father.*) Oh, you are here! I beg your pardon!

NICHOLAS.

(*rising.*) Never mind.

(*Chain goes through the room and out at the other door.*)

(*alone.*) Vasily Ermilovich has returned to the Church. Boris is ruined through me. Luba will marry. Is it possible that I am mistaken — mistaken in believing Thee? Ah no! Father, help me!

ACT V

SCENE I

A cell in the Disciplinary Battalion.— Prisoners sitting or lying about.— BORIS reading the Gospel and making comments.

A man who has been flogged led out from this cell.—“ Oh, why is there not another Pugachev to avenge us? ”

PRINCESS rushes in.— She is turned out.— Struggle with an officer.

Prisoners ordered to prayers.

BORIS sent to the dungeon, and sentenced to be flogged.

SCENE II

The CZAR'S Study.— Cigarettes.— Jokes — Blandishments.— Princess is announced.— Ordered to wait.

Cringing PETITIONERS.

Then enter PRINCESS.— Request refused.

(Exeunt.)

SCENE III

MARIE IVANOVNA.— Speak with doctor of illness of Nicholas Ivanovich.— He has changed, is very mild, but dejected.

NICHOLAS IVANOVICH *enters with doctor.*— Treatment is futile.— The soul is more important, but I consent for the sake of my wife. (*Enter TONIA with STEPHEN, LUBA with STARKOVSKY.*) *Talk of the land.* NICHOLAS IVANOVICH *tries not to offend the others.* (*All go.*)

NICHOLAS.

(*alone with LISA.*) I am in a state of continual vacillation. Have I done right? I have achieved nothing. I have ruined Boris. Vasily Ermilovich has returned to the Church. I am an example of weakness. I see God did not want me to be His servant. He has many other servants. They will do the right thing without me. To see that clearly is to obtain peace of mind.

(*LISA goes.— He prays.*)

PRINCESS *dashes in and kills him.*— *All rush in.— He says he did it himself accidentally.— Writes petition to the Tsar.*

Enter VASILY ERMILOVICH with Dukhobors.— *Nicholas Ivanovich dies rejoicing that the falsehoods of the Church are broken down.— He realises the meaning of his life.*

ALTERNATIVE FOR LAST SCENE.

Letter from Boris full of desperate agitation.
“I know — I have also passed through that.”

LIBERALS.— *A professor from the height of his superiority forgives and explains.*

A Liberal society lady, wearing diamonds, present.—

“ They are unable to understand. It will take a hundred years for them to do so.”

THE MAN WHO WAS DEAD

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ANNA DMITRIEVNA KARENIN. Fifty years.

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THE MAN WHO WAS DEAD

ACT I

SCENE I

ANNA PAVLOVNA, *a stout, middle-aged, tight-laced lady, is sitting at the tea-table.*

The NURSE enters, with a tea-pot in her hand.

NURSE.

May I take some boiling water?

ANNA PAVLOVNA

Oh, certainly. How is baby?

NURSE.

As restless as can be. What is the good of ladies trying to nurse their babies themselves! All their worries the baby has to suffer for. When a mother stays awake all night long, and never leaves off crying, what can her milk be worth?

ANNA PAVLOVNA

Oh, that's over, I think. She is quiet now.

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NURSE.

Quiet, indeed! I can't stand looking at the poor dear. Just now she started off to write, and how she cried all the time!

SASHA (*entering*).

(*To NURSE.*) Lisa wants you.

NURSE.

I'm coming. (*She goes out.*)

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Nurse says she still goes on crying. I do wish she could manage to get over it!

SASHA.

Mother, you are perfectly astonishing! How on earth can you expect her to behave as if nothing had happened, when she's just left her husband and taken her baby with her?

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

I don't exactly. But the past must be left to take care of itself. You may be quite sure that if I approve of my daughter having left her husband, and if I welcome the step she has taken — well, that he deserved it. She has no reason to

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make herself miserable. She ought only to be overjoyed at being free now from such an abominable wretch.

SASHA.

How can you talk like that, mother? You know perfectly well it isn't true. He's not a wretch; he's a wonderful man — yes, he is. Oh, of course, I know he has faults, but he's wonderful!

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Wonderful, indeed! The moment he has money, whether he gets it from his own pocket or somebody else's —

SASHA.

Mother! He has never taken anybody else's money.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Yes, he has. Hasn't he taken his wife's money?

SASHA.

Why, he settled the whole of his fortune on Lisa!

ANNA PAVLOVNA

It was the only thing for him to do. He knew he would squander everything he could lay hands on.

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SASHA.

I'm sure I don't care whether he would or he wouldn't. All I know is that a wife ought not to leave her husband — particularly a husband like Fedia.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

I suppose you would have liked her to wait till he had spent absolutely everything they had, and not have objected in the least when he brought his gipsy mistresses home with him?

SASHA.

He hasn't got any mistresses.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

That is the worst of it — he seems to have bewitched you all; I don't know how. I should like to see him try it on with me. I can see through him, and he knows it. In Lisa's place I would have left him a good twelve months ago.

SASHA.

Oh, you think it's all so easy!

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

That's just where you're mistaken. It's very far from easy for me to see my daughter separated

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from her husband. It is, indeed. But anything is better than that a young life like hers should be ruined. I consider it truly providential that she has made up her mind to go, and that everything is over between them.

SASHA.

Perhaps it isn't.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

It will be. If only he will consent to a divorce.

SASHA.

What will be the good of that?

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

The good will be that she is young and that she may still have some happiness in store for her.

SASHA.

It is simply disgusting to hear you talk like that, mother! Lisa can't love another man.

ANNA PAVLOVNA

Why not? Why shouldn't she, when she's free? There are men a thousand times better than your adored Fedia who would be enchanted to marry Lisa.

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SASHA.

I know whom you mean, mother. It's very wrong of you. I know you mean Victor Karenin.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Well, there's no harm in it if I do. He's been in love with her for ten years, and she loves him.

SASHA.

She doesn't love him in the least as a husband. They have just been friends ever since they were children.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

I know what such friendships mean. Oh, if only nothing crops up to prevent it!

A MAID *enters*.

What is it?

MAID.

The porter has come back with an answer to the note for Victor Mikhailovich.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Who sent him?

MAID.

Elizaveta Andreevna.

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ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Well?

MAID.

Victor Mikhailovich told the porter he would be here directly.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

How extraordinary, when we were just talking about him! But what can she want him for now? (To SASHA.) Do you know?

SASHA.

Maybe I do. Maybe I don't.

ANNA PAVLOVNA

You always make secrets of things.

SASHA.

Lisa will tell you when she comes.

ANNA PAVLOVNA

shakes her head. (To the MAID) The samovar is cold. Take it away, Duniasha, and make the water boil again.

The MAID takes the samovar and goes out SASHA rises as if to follow her from the room.

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ANNA PAVLOVNA.

You see I was right. She has sent for him at once.

SASHA.

I dare say it's some perfectly different reason from what you think.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

What for, then?

SASHA.

She doesn't care a scrap more for Karenin than for that old nurse Tripovna.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

You will see. I know her. She's sent for him because she wants him to console her.

SASHA.

O mother, how little you know her if you can think —

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

You will see. Yes, and I am very, very glad indeed.

SASHA.

We'll see. (*She goes out, humming.*)

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ANNA PAVLOVNA.

(*Alone, shaking her head and muttering to herself.*) Very well, I don't mind. Very well, I don't mind. I —

MAID (*entering.*)

Victor Mikhailovich has come.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Ask him in, and tell Elizaveta Andreevna.

The MAID goes out by the door leading to the inner apartments.

VICTOR KARENIN

entering, and shaking hands with ANNA PAVLOVNA. I got a note from Elizaveta Andreevna asking me to come round. I meant in any case to call this evening, so I was delighted . . . is she quite well?

ANNA PAVLOVNA

She is all right; the baby is a little ailing. She will be here in a minute. (*Sadly.*) We are having a hard time just now. But you know all about that.

KARENIN

I know. I was here the day before yesterday, when that letter came from him. But is this really a final decision?

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ANNA PAVLOVNA.

I should think so! It would be utterly impossible to begin all over again.

KARENIN.

I should like to urge that in this case particularly second thoughts may be best. It is a terrible thing to tear lives apart that have been bound together.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

No doubt. But with them the rift began long ago, and the complete severance was easier than one would have thought. He understands that after all that has happened he could not return home, even if it had been open to him to do so.

KARENIN.

Why?

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

After his disgusting conduct? He swore it should never never happen again, and he gave his word that if it did he would voluntarily resign all claims on his wife, and give her back her entire freedom.

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KARENIN.

How can a wife tied by the marriage bond be given back her freedom?

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

She can be made free by a divorce. He has agreed to a divorce, and we shall insist on it.

KARLNIN.

But Elizaveta Andreevna loved him so deeply —

ANNA PAVLOVNA

Her love has been so terribly tried that there is hardly anything left of it. Drinking, gambling, unfaithfulness — what love could bear with such a husband?

KARENIN.

True love holds in spite of all.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

You say: love. But who could love a man like that? He was perfectly unreliable; there was no depending on him in anything. You know the last thing that happened (*looking back at the door, and finishing quickly what she had to say.*) Their situation was absolutely critical, everything was pawned — they had nothing to meet the most necessary expenses. At last his uncle sent two thousand roubles due as interest. He takes that money and disappears, leaving his wife alone with the sick

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baby, waiting for him; and then comes a note, asking to have his clothes and things sent after him.

KARENIN.

Yes, I know.

SASHA and LISA come in together.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Victor Mikhailovich does come, you see, when you send for him.

KARENIN.

I would have come sooner, but I was detained
(*he shakes hands with the sisters.*)

LISA

Thank you so much I have a great service to ask you. There is no one else I could turn to.

KARENIN

Anything I can do, I will.

LISA.

You know all about this, don't you?

KARENIN.

Yes, I know.

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ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Then I will leave you to yourselves. (*To SASHA.*) Come with me. We shall be in the way.
(ANNA PAVLOVNA and SASHA go out.)

LISA.

Well, he has written to me saying it's all over between us. I (*restraining her tears*) was so hurt that —. Anyhow, I agreed to separate. I have answered that I am willing to part, as he wishes it.

KARL NIN

And now you are sorry for having said so?

LISA.

Yes. I feel I ought not to have accepted. I cannot.— Anything, but not to part with him. Now, give him that letter. Please, Victor, give him the letter and tell him.— Bring him back!

KARENIN (*surprised.*)

Well, but —

LISA.

Say I ask him to forget all that has happened, and to come back. Of course I could send him the letter. But I know him so well. his first impulse,

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as always, would be a good one; but then somebody else's influence would come in, and he would change his mind and do the contrary of what he really wished.

KARENIN.

I will do what I can.

LISA.

You are surprised at my asking *you* to help me?

KARENIN.

No — well, yes, to tell the truth; yes, I am surprised.

LISA.

But not angry?

KARENIN

How can I be angry with you?

LISA

I asked *you* because I know you love him.

KARENIN.

Him, and you. You know that. And you know that I love you for yourself alone, not for anything I may hope from you. Thank you for trusting me. I will do all I can.

LISA.

I know you will. I will tell you everything. I called to-day at Afremov's to ask if they knew where he was. They told me that he had gone to the gipsies. I am in terrible anxiety. I am so afraid of his passion for them. If he is not restrained in time, it will enslave him again. It must be prevented. You will look for him?

KARENIN.

I'll go at once.

LISA.

Go. Find him, and tell him I've forgotten everything and am waiting for him.

KARENIN (*rising.*)

But where shall I go to find him?

LISA.

He is at the gipsies'. I went to the place myself. I went to the door—I was just going to send in the letter, but then I thought I had better not, and decided to ask you. Here is the address. Tell him that he is to come back as if nothing had happened; that I have forgotten everything. Do it out of love for him, and out of friendship for us.

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KARENIN.

I will do everything I can. (*He bows to her and goes out.*)

LISA (*alone.*)

I cannot, I cannot. Anything but — I cannot!
(*Enter SASHA.*)

SASHA.

Well, have you asked him?

LISA (*nods.*)

SASHA.

And he was willing to go?

LISA.

Of course.

SASHA.

But why did you ask *him* to do it? I can't understand.

LISA.

Whom else could I ask?

SASHA.

But you know that he is in love with you.

LISA.

That is a thing of the past. And whom else

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would you have me ask? Tell me: you think he will come back?

SASHA.

I am sure he will. He —

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

(*coming back.*) Where is Victor Mikhailovich?

LISA.

Gone.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Gone?

LISA.

I have asked him to do something for me.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

What was it? Another secret?

LISA.

No secret at all. I simply asked him to take a letter to Fedia.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

To Fedia? To Fedor Vasilievich?

LISA.

Yes, to Fedia.

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ANNA PAVLOVNA.

I thought it was all over between you.

LISA.

I cannot part from him.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

What! The same old story beginning again?

LISA.

I wanted to: I tried hard, but I can't. I'll do anything you like, but I can't part from him.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

You don't mean you want him to come back?

LISA.

Yes, I do.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

To have that wretch again in your house!

LISA.

Mother, I wish you would not talk about my husband like that.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

He was your husband, but he is so no more.

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LISA.

He is my husband.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

A spendthrift, a drunkard, a rake — and you cannot part from him.

LISA.

Why do you torture me? I am wretched enough as it is. You are so inconsiderate —

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

That is how you take it. I torture you, do I? Very well. Then I had better go. I cannot stand it.

(LISA keeps silent.)

I see; I am in your way, and you want me to go. I can only say I am disgusted. I don't understand you, or what you want. You are wholly unreliable. One moment you decide to leave your husband, the next you send for the man who is in love with you.

LISA.

Nothing of the kind.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

You know that Karenin proposed to you, and

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now you send him to bring back your husband.
Do you simply want to make him jealous?

LISA.

Mother! how abominable! Do leave me in peace, can't you?

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Turn out your mother, do; and welcome your depraved husband. No, no; I won't wait for you to do it. I shall go at once. And you can do whatever you choose. (*She goes out, banging the door.*)

LISA.

(*dropping into a chair.*) That, too!

SASHA.

Don't worry. That will be all right. We will make peace with mother.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

(*crossing the room.*) Duniasha, my bag!

SASHA.

Listen, mother!

(*She follows her mother out of the room looking significantly at LISA.*)

SCENE II

A room at the gipsies'. Gipsies sing "Kanavella."

(FEDIA is lying on the sofa, his face down; he has taken off his coat.

AFREMOV is sitting astride on a chair, facing the leader of the gipsy singers.

An OFFICER sits at the table, on which are standing bottles of champagne and glasses. At his side sits a MUSICIAN taking down the songs.)

AFREMOV.

You asleep, Fedia?

FEDIA.

(rising.) Shut up! Now then, "Not the evening hour."

GIPSY.

Not yet, Fedor Vasilievich. Let Masha sing a song first.

FEDIA.

All right. And after that, "Not the evening hour." *(He lies down again.)*

OFFICER.

Let's have "The fatal hour!"

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GIPSY.

(*to AFREMOV.*) Shall she sing that?

AFREMOV.

I don't mind.

OFFICER.

(*to the MUSICIAN.*) Have you got it right?

MUSICIAN.

It's impossible to take it down correctly. Each time the tune changes somehow. And they seem to have a different scale. Now, here. (*He calls to a gipsy woman.*) How is this? (*Humming the tune.*) Is this right?

GIPSY WOMAN.

Quite right. Splendid.

FEDIA.

(*rising.*) He won't get it right on paper, and even if he does, and then shovels it into an opera, he'll make it seem absolutely rotten. Well, Masha, fire away! Anything will do: "The fatal hour," if you like. Take the guitar. (*He rises, sits down facing her, and looks in her eyes.*)

(*MASHA sings.*)

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FEDIA.

That's wonderful. And you're wonderful too, Masha! Now then, "Not the evening hour."

AFREMOV.

Wait a moment. Let's have my funeral song first.

OFFICER.

Funeral? What's that?

AFREMOV.

Why, when I die. . . Really die, you know; when I am lying in the coffin, the gipsies will come . . . I shall give directions to my wife in my will, you know. And then, when they begin singing their "Shol-me-wersta," I shall jump out of the coffin, don't you know. That is the song you ought to note down. Now then, start in!
(*The GIPSIES sing.*)

AFREMOV.

What do you say to that? Eh? And now, "Love, my dear ones."

(*The GIPSIES sing.*)

(*AFREMOV dances to the tune.*)

The GIPSIES, smiling, go on singing and beat the measure.

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AFREMOV *sits down. The song ends.)*

GIPSY.

I say, Mikhail Andreevich, you dance like a true gipsy.

FEDIA.

And now, "Not the evening hour."

(The GIPSIES sing.)

That's it. That is the song. Wonderful! And how does it all happen? What is it all about? Wonderful, wonderful! To think that man can reach such ecstasy and then — nothing more; nothing further — we can achieve nothing with it!

MUSICIAN.

(taking notes.) Yes, it is very original.

FEDIA.

Original is not the word. It is the real thing.

AFREMOV.

Well, Pharaoh's tribe, take a rest. *(He takes a guitar, and sits down at the side of the gipsy girl KATIA.)*

MUSICIAN.

It is very simple, on the whole, but there's something queer about the rhythm.

FEDIA.

(with a gesture, comes near MASHA and sits down on the sofa close to her.) O Masha, Masha, you turn my soul inside out. .

MASHA.

Well? What is it I asked you for?

FEDIA.

What? Money. *(He takes money out from his trousers' pockets.)* There, take it.

(MASHA laughs, takes the money, and hides it in her bodice.)

FEDIA.

(to the GIPSIES.) Incomprehensible creature! She unlocks the gates of heaven for me! And then all she asks for is — money! In the devil's name, do you understand yourself what you are doing?

MASHA.

I don't know what there is to understand. I

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understand that if I care for some one I do my best to please him, and I sing for him better than for all the rest.

FEDIA.

Do you care for me?

MASHA.

You know how much.

FEDIA.

You — marvel! (*Kisses her.*)

(*The GIPSIES, MEN and WOMEN, leave the room. A few couples remain: AFREMOV with KATIA, the OFFICER with another girl, GASHA. The MUSICIAN writes. A gipsy plays a waltz on the guitar very softly.*)

FEDIA.

I am a married man And you belong to your gipsy troupe. They would not let you —

MASHA.

My heart and the troupe have nothing to do with one another. If I love a man, I love him no matter what comes. Or if I hate a man, I hate him, and no help for it.

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FEDIA.

I am happy! I am happy! And you — are you happy?

MASHA.

I'm always happy when nice visitors come, and then we all have fun.

GIPSY.

(*entering, to FEDIA.*) A gentleman is asking for you.

FEDIA.

What gentleman?

GIPSY.

Don't know. He is well dressed. Sable fur coat.

FEDIA.

Rich? Well, ask him in.

AFREMOV.

Who can it be wants to see you here?

FEDIA.

The devil knows. Who can want me!

(*KARENIN comes in looking round the room.*)

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FEDIA.

Victor! You are the last man I would have expected. Take off your coat. What wind has blown you here? Sit down. They will sing "Not the evening hour" for you.

KARENIN.

Je voudrais vous parler sans témoin.

FEDIA.

What about?

KARENIN.

Je viens de chez vous. Votre femme m'a chargée de cette lettre, et puis —

FEDIA.

(takes the letter, reads, frowns, then smiles affectionately.) Listen, Karenin; you know, I dare say, what that letter contains?

KARENIN.

I know. And I want to tell you —

FEDIA.

Wait, wait. Don't imagine, please, that I am drunk, and that my words are unaccountable — I mean, that I am unaccountable. I am drunk, but

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my head is quite clear about this. But what have you been told to tell me?

KARENIN.

Your wife has asked me to find you, and to say that she is waiting for you. She begs you to forget everything, and to come back.

FEDIA.

(listens silently, looking into his eyes.) I still don't understand. Why have you? . . .

KARENIN.

Elizaveta Andreeva sent for me, and asked me —

FEDIA.

Then —

KARENIN.

But it is not so much in your wife's name as on my own behalf that I implore you to come home with me!

FEDIA.

You're a better man than I am. What a ridiculous way to put it! It's not hard to be better than me: I'm a scoundrel, and you are a good man. That's why I won't go back on my decision. And not only because of that. I simply cannot, and will not. How could I go back?

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KARENIN.

Come to me first. I will tell her you have come back, and to-morrow —

FEDIA.

Well — to-morrow? To-morrow I shall be just what I am now, and she will be the same as she is. (*He goes to the table and drinks.*) Better have the tooth straight out. I told her that if I didn't keep my word, she was to leave me. I did not keep it, and there's an end of it.

KARENIN.

For you, but not for her.

FEDIA.

It's very extraordinary that you should take so much trouble to prevent our marriage from being broken up.

(*KARENIN is about to say something, when MASHA enters.*)

FEDIA.

(*interrupting him.*) Now just hear her sing "The Flax." Masha, sing for him.

(*The GIPSIES gradually return to the room.*)

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MASHA.

(whispering.) We ought to give him a cheer.

FEDIA.

(laughing.) Give him a cheer! Three cheers for Victor Mikhailovich!

(The GIPSIES sing, cheering KARENIN.)

KARENIN.

(listens, somehow confused. To FEDIA.) How much ought I to give them?

FEDIA.

Give them twenty-five roubles.

(KARENIN gives the money, then quietly leaves the room.)

There, that's good. Now "The Flax."
(Looking round.) Hullo! Karenin has vanished. Devil take him!

(The GIPSIES disperse.)

FEDIA.

(sitting down close to MASHA.) You know who that was?

MASHA.

I heard the name.

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FEDIA.

He is an excellent fellow. He came to fetch me home, to my wife. She loves me, and that is how I behave, fool that I am!

MASHA.

You're wrong. You ought to have pity on her.

FEDIA.

You think so? I don't.

MASHA.

Of course, if you don't love her, you oughtn't to.

FEDIA.

How do you know that?

MASHA.

Maybe I know.

FEDIA.

Give me a kiss. Now, "The Flax," and then let us stop.

(*The GIPSIES sing.*)

FEDIA.

Wonderful! Wonderful! Oh, never to wake up! To die like that without waking!

ACT II

SCENE I

Two weeks have elapsed. At LISA'S.

(KARENIN and ANNA PAVLOVNA are sitting in the dining-room.

SASHA enters from the inner door.)

KARENIN.

Well?

SASHA.

The doctor says all danger is over now. The only thing is to prevent the child taking cold.

ANNA PAVLOVNA

Poor Lisa is quite exhausted with all this anxiety.

SASHA.

He says it is a sort of slight angina. What is that? (*She points to a basket.*)

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Grapes. Victor brought them.

KARENIN.

Would you like to have some?

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SASHA.

Lisa like grapes. She has become so nervous of late.

KARENIN.

She has not slept these two nights, nor eaten anything.

SASHA.

(*smiling.*) Neither have you.

KARENIN.

That is quite another thing.

DOCTOR.

(*entering with LISA, importantly.*) As I told you: change the compress every half-hour, if the child is not asleep. If he is asleep, don't disturb him. No painting the throat. Keep the room warm, and —

LISA.

And if he has another fit of choking?

DOCTOR.

He won't. But, anyhow, if it happens, spray his throat. Then there are the powders to give him. One the first thing in the morning, another at night. I will write the prescription.

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ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Won't you have some tea, doctor?

DOCTOR.

No, thanks. My patients are waiting for me.
(*He sits down at the table. SASHA brings him paper and ink.*)

LISA.

Then you are quite sure it's not croup?

DOCTOR

(*smiling.*) Quite sure. (*He writes.*)

KARENIN

(*to LISA.*) Have some tea now. And the best thing will be for you to go and rest. Look what you are like!

LISA.

I breathe again now. But it's your doing. You are a true friend. (*Presses his hand. SASHA steps aside, visibly annoyed*) I thank you, my dear friend. This is a case when a friend —

KARENIN.

I have not done anything. You have nothing to thank me for.

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LISA.

Who was it who had no sleep for two nights?
Who brought the very best doctor?

KARENIN.

My reward is that the child is out of danger.
And I am still more rewarded by your kindness —
your extreme kindness.

*(They again shake hands and he
smiles, showing the money that she
has left in his hand.)*

LISA.

(smiling.) That is the doctor's fee. I never
know how to give it to him.

KARENIN.

Nor do I.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

What is it you don't know how to do?

LISA.

How to pay the doctor. He saved what to me
is more than my life, and I have to repay it with
money. There is something so unpleasant in the
idea.

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ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Leave that to me. I will do it all right.
There's no difficulty whatever.

DOCTOR.

(rises and hands the prescription.) Dissolve each powder in a tablespoonful of boiled water, stir it and . . . *(he continues to give his directions to LISA, while KARENIN sits at the table drinking tea. ANNA PAVLOVNA and SASHA step forward.)*

SASHA.

I can't stand the way they talk to each other!
She behaves as if she were in love with him.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

I should not wonder if she were.

SASHA.

It's perfectly disgusting!

(The DOCTOR shakes hands with the family, and goes out. ANNA PAVLOVNA follows him to the hall.)

LISA.

(to Karenin.) He is such a sweet child. The moment he felt better, he began to smile and to

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babble. I will go to him. But I am sorry to leave you.

KARENIN.

Have some tea first. Eat something.

LISA.

I don't want anything. I feel so relieved now all this anxiety is over. (*She sobs.*)

KARENIN.

You see how exhausted you are!

LISA.

I am so happy. Will you come along with me to see the child?

KARENIN.

With pleasure.

LISA.

Then come.

(*They go out together.*)

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

(*entering from the hall. To SASHA.*) Why do you look so gloomy? I handed him the money all right, and he took it quite simply.

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SASHA.

I think it's odious of her! She's taken him to the nursery. Just as if he were engaged to her — or her husband!

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

What difference does it make to you? Do you want to marry him yourself, I wonder?

SASHA.

To marry that sign-post! I would marry any one sooner than him. Nothing of the sort ever entered my head. I simply feel disgusted that, after Fedia, she should be making up to a stranger.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

He is not a stranger. They have been friends since they were children.

SASHA

They're in love — I can see they are, by the way they smile and make eyes at each other.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

No wonder. He's been such a help now, all during the baby's illness — so full of sympathy! He did all he could, and she is grateful to him.

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I see no harm in her being in love with Victor and marrying him.

SASHA.

It would be odious, disgusting! Simply disgusting!

(KARENIN and LISA come in again. KARENIN takes leave without speaking. SASHA agitatedly leaves the room.)

LISA.

(to her mother.) What is the matter with Sasha?

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

I don't know, I'm sure.

(LISA sighs.)

SCENE II

In AFREMOV's study. Glasses full of wine are on the table.

(Among the guests are AFREMOV; FEDIA; STAKHOV, a man with a full beard, long hair; BUTKEVICH, who is clean shaven; KOROTKOV, Afremov's toady.)

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KOROTKOV.

And I tell you, he can't win. La Belle-Bois is the best horse in Europe. I bet you she is.

STAKHOV.

Shut up, old chap. You know nobody believes what you say, and nobody will take your bet.

KOROTKOV.

I tell you your Kartouche will be beaten.

AFREMOV.

Don't quarrel. Let me settle the point for you. Ask Fedia. You can depend upon his judgment.

FEDIA.

They're both good horses. It all depends on the jockeys.

SI AKHOV.

That jockey Gusev is a wrong 'un. He ought to be watched.

KOROTKOV.

(*shouting.*) That's not true.

FEDIA.

Look here. I'll solve the problem for you. Who won the Derby?

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KOROTKOV.

I know, but that does not prove anything. It was just by accident. If Cracus hadn't been taken ill. Now, look here —

(A MAN-SERVANT enters.)

AFREMOV.

What is it?

SERVANT.

There's a lady here who wishes to speak to Fedor Vasilievich.

AFREMOV.

Who is she?

SERVANT.

I do not know. A real lady, sir.

AFREMOV.

Fedor, a lady for you.

FEDIA.

(alarmed.) Who is she?

AFREMOV.

He doesn't know.

SERVANT.

Shall I show her into the drawing-room, sir?

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FEDIA.

Wait. I'll go and see. (*He goes out.*)

KOROTKOV.

Who can it be? Oh, of course, Mashka.

STAKHOV.

What Mashka?

KOROTKOV.

That gipsy-girl Masha. She's simply mad about him.

STAKHOV.

Nice girl she is. And how she sings!

AFREMOV.

Beautiful voice. Taniusha and she are wonderful. Last night they sang with Peter.

STAKHOV.

What luck that man has!

AFREMOV.

What? To have all the women after him? That's not much of a blessing!

KOROTKOV.

I hate these gipsy women. They're so vulgar.

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BUTKEVICH.

Nonsense!

KOROTKOV.

I would give you the whole lot of them for one French woman.

AFREMOV.

Oh, you and your æsthetic views! I must go and see who the woman is. (*He follows FEDIA out of the room.*)

STAKHOV.

If it is Masha, bring her in. Let her sing us something. The gipsies of to-day are not up to the old level. There was a girl—Tania! A devil of a creature.

BUTKEVICH.

I expect they are just the same as they were before.

STAKHOV.

Nothing of the sort. Now they've taken to singing vulgar ballads, instead of the genuine songs they used to in the old days.

BUTKEVICH.

There are some very good ballads.

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KOROTKOV.

If I will tell them what to sing; I bet you won't know whether it's a ballad or a folk-song.

STAKHOV.

Betting is Korotkov's only line of thought.

AFREMOV.

(returning.) The lady is not Masha, gentlemen And she must be shown in here — there is no other place for Fedia to talk with her. Let us go to the billiard-room.

(They all rise and leave the room. FEDIA and SASHA enter.)

SASHA.

(timidly.) Fedia, forgive me if my intrusion annoys you, but for God's sake listen to what I have come to tell you *(Her voice trembles.)*

(FEDIA paces up and down the room)

SASHA.

(She sits down, looks at him) Fedia, do come home!

FEDIA.

Now listen, Sasha I understand you very

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well. You are a good girl, and in your place I should do just like you — try to mend things. But if you were in my place — though it's rather odd to imagine such a delicate, sweet girl as you in it — if you were in my place, I say, you would have done just what I did — you would go, and not be in the way of somebody else.

SASHA.

In the way of somebody else? But do you imagine Lisa can live without you?

FEDIA.

Certainly, Sasha dear, she can, and she will. And she will be happy, much happier than with me.

SASHA.

Never.

FEDIA.

You are mistaken. (*He takes her hand and holds it.*) But that is not the point. What is more important is that I cannot live the old life. If you take a piece of cardboard and bend it a hundred times, it may hold; but bend just once more and it will break. That's the way it was with Lisa and me. I cannot look into her eyes. And she cannot look in mine. Believe me. It hurts us both too much.

SASHA.

No, no!

FEDIA.

You say, No; but you know I am right.

SASHA.

I can only judge by imagining what it would be like if I were in her place, and you told me what you said just there. It would be awful for me.

FEDIA.

Yes, for you. . . .
(*An uncomfortable pause.*)

SASHA.

(*rising.*) Must it be as you say?

FEDIA.

It must.

SASHA

Come back, Fedia! Come back!

FEDIA.

You are so kind, Sasha dear! I shall always hold you dear in my memory. . . . Good-bye, my dear. Let me kiss you. (*He kisses her on the forehead.*)

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SASHA.

(*excited.*) No, I don't say good-bye for good. I don't believe it's all over. I won't believe it! Fedia . . .

FEDIA.

Listen, Sasha. But promise you will not tell anybody what I am going to tell you now. Will you give me your word?

SASHA.

I won't tell any one.

FEDIA.

Well, the truth is that, although I am her husband, the father of her child, I am nothing to her. . . . Wait, don't interrupt me. Don't imagine I am jealous. I am not. Not in the least. First of all, I should have no right to be; and then I have no reason. Victor Karenin is her old friend, and mine too. He loves her, and she loves him.

SASHA.

No.

FEDIA.

She loves him, but being an honest woman, she thinks she has no right to love anybody but her

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husband. And yet she loves him, and will give way to her feelings for him when this obstacle (*pointing to himself*) is removed. And I will remove it — so that they may be happy. (*His voice shakes.*)

SASHA.

Fedia, don't talk in that way.

FEDIA.

You know quite well it is true. I shall rejoice in their happiness. It is the very best thing I could do. I shall not go back. I shall give them their freedom. Tell them that. No, don't tell them anything. And good-bye! (*He kisses her head and opens the door for her.*)

SASHA

Fedia, how I admire you.

FEDIA.

Good-bye, good-bye!

(SASHA goes out.)

FEDIA

(*alone.*) That's right, that's all right (*He rings the bell. To the servant, who enters.*) Call your master. (*alone.*) It must be so.

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FEDIA.

Let us go.

AFREMOV.

(*enters.*) Well, have you settled things?

FEDIA.

Oh, yes. In the very best way. Everything is perfect now. Where are all the others?

AFREMOV.

They're playing billiards.

FEDIA.

Let's join them, then. (*They go out.*)

ACT III

SCENE I

ANNA DMITRIEVNA KARENINA's *boudoir*. It is a room of elegant simplicity, full of all kinds of souvenirs.

(*She is fifty years old, a grande dame who tries to look younger, and likes to interlard her conversation with French words.*)

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ANNA DMITRIEVNA, VICTOR KARENIN'S
mother, is writing a letter.

SERVANT.

(entering.) Prince Sergius Dmitrievich.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Well, ask him in, of course. *(She turns and looks into a mirror, arranging her hair.)*

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

(entering.) I hope I am not in the way.
(Kisses her hand.)

(He is a well-preserved bachelor of sixty, with moustache. The dignified face of the old soldier has a very sad expression.)

ANNA DMITRIEVNA

You know you are always welcome And to-day more than ever. You got my note?

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

I did — and here I am.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Oh, my dear friend, I begin to lose hope. He is bewitched, positively bewitched I never thought he could be so obstinate, so heartless and

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indifferent towards me. He is quite changed since that woman left her husband.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

How do matters stand now?

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Well, he wants to marry her at all costs.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

But how about her husband?

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

He consents to be divorced.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Oh! Is that so?

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Victor is willing to put up with all the ugliness of the divorce court. Lawyers, evidence of guilt. . . . All this is disgusting. And he does not mind! I cannot understand it. He with his delicacy, his timidity.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

He is in love. And when a man is truly in love —

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ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Yes, but in our time love was a pure friendship which lasted a lifetime. Such love I can understand and value.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Nowadays, ideal love does not exist any more. *La possession de l'âme ne leur suffit plus.* That is a fact, and we cannot change it. But what about Victor?

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

No, he is not like the rest. But this is positively witchcraft. He is changed, I tell you. You know I called on them — he asked me to — I didn't find them at home, and I left a card. She asks if I will receive her. And to-day (*she looks at the watch*) about two — it is nearly that now — she will be here. I promised Victor to receive her, but you may imagine in what a state I am. I feel quite lost. So, true to my old habit, I have sent for you to come. I am in such need of your help!

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

You are very good.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

You will understand. You must see that her

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visit means the final decision, don't you? Victor's whole future depends on it. I must either refuse my consent . . . but how can I?

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Don't you know her at all?

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

I have never seen her. But I am afraid of her. A good woman cannot leave her husband — and such a good man too. He is Victor's friend — did you know that? He often came to us. I thought him very nice. But whatever he might be, whatever wrong he has done her, a wife ought not to leave her husband. She must bear her cross. There is one thing I can't possibly grasp: how could Victor, with his religious views, make up his mind to marry a divorced woman? I have heard him say over and over again — once quite lately to Spitzin — that divorce is not consistent with the true Christian doctrine. And now he is in favour of it. If she has been able to fascinate him to this point . . . ! I *am* afraid of her. How silly of me to talk all the time like this. I asked you to come so as to have your view of the situation. What do you think? Tell me. Have you spoken to Victor?

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PRINCE ABRESKOV.

I have. And my opinion is that he loves her. He's already got into the habit of loving her, so to speak. Love has taken hold him. He is a man who opens his heart slowly — but then for good. He will never love any other woman, and he could not be happy with any other woman but her.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

And Varia Kasanzeva, who would gladly have married him! Such a nice girl, and so devoted to him!

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

You are counting your chickens before they are hatched. That's quite out of question now. I think the only thing for you is to consent, and to help him to marry.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

To marry a divorced woman! And suppose that afterwards he were to meet his wife's first husband somewhere! How can you calmly suggest such a thing! Could any mother wish to see her only son — and such a son — married like that?

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

My dear friend, it cannot be helped. Of course

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it would be nicer if he married a young girl you know and you like, but he will not. Besides — imagine if he had married a gipsy girl or . . . And Lisa Protassova is a very nice woman. I have met her at my niece Nelly's. She is a very sweet, kind, loving, moral woman.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Moral, indeed! A woman who has left her husband!

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

How unlike you to speak so! How cruel. Her husband is one of those men of whom one may say that they are their worst enemies. But certainly he is a worse enemy of his wife than of himself. He is a weak man, a perfect wreck, a drunkard. He has squandered his own fortune and all that she possessed; she has a child. And you condemn her for having left such a man. And besides, it was not she, it was he who left her.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Oh, the ugliness of it all! And that I should have to take part in it!

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

What is it that the gospel says?

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ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Yes, I know. Forgive us as we forgive those who trespass against us. But this is beyond me!

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

How could she go on living with such a man? Even if she had not loved any one else she would have had to leave him. She had to do it for her child's sake. Her husband himself, a clever and kind man when he is in his senses, advised her to leave him.

(VICTOR comes in. He kisses his mother's hand, and shakes hands with PRINCE ABRESKOV.)

VICTOR.

Mother, I have come to tell you that Elizaveta Andreevna will be here presently. I will tell the servant to show her in. There is only one thing I ask you. If you are still opposed to my marrying her —

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

(interrupting him.) Most certainly I am.

VICTOR.

(continues frowning.) Then don't speak about it, I beseech you! Don't inflict a refusal upon her.

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ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

We shall not speak about that, I suppose. Anyhow, I shall not start the topic.

VICTOR.

Nor will she. I only want you to know her.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

One thing I cannot understand: how do you reconcile your wish to marry Madame Protassova, whose husband is alive, with your condemnation of divorce from the Christian point of view? You — so religious!

VICTOR.

Mother, that is cruel! Are we all so unimpeachable that, in this complex world, there is no discrepancy between our convictions and our practice? Why are you so unkind to me, mother?

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

I love you. I want you to be happy!

VICTOR.

(to PRINCE ABRESKOV.) Sergius Dmitrievich!

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

I don't doubt you want him to be happy. But

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grey heads like ours are unable to know what passes in the minds of youth. Least of all, a mother who has her settled ideas about her son's happiness. On that point women are all alike.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Indeed! I ought to have known you would all be against me. Of course you are free to do as you like. You are of age. But it will kill me.

VICTOR.

I do not recognise you. It is worse than cruel to talk like that.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

(to VICTOR.) Don't talk like that, Victor. You know that your mother does not act as she speaks.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

I shall speak exactly as I think and feel, but without hurting her feelings.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

I am quite sure of that.

SERVANT.

(*enters.*) Here she is.

VICTOR.

I'll go.

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SERVANT.

Elizaveta Andreevna Protassova.

VICTOR.

I'll go, mother. I beseech you —

(PRINCE ABRESKOV *rises.*)

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Ask the lady in. (*To PRINCE ABRESKOV.*)
Don't go.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

I thought you would prefer to talk with her
tête-à-tête.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

No, I am afraid. (*Fussing about.*) If I want
to be with her alone I will signal to you. That
depends . . . But at the moment I should
feel uncomfortable alone with her. When I want
you to leave the room I will do like that. (*She
makes a sign.*)

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

I shall know. I am sure you will like her.
Only be just!

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Oh, you are all against me!

(LISA, in hat and visiting dress,
comes into the room.)

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ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

(*rising.*) I was so sorry you were not at home when I called. It is so kind of you to come to see me.

LISA.

I did not expect — thank you so much for wishing to see me.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

You have met before, I believe? (*Pointing to PRINCE ABRESKOV.*)

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Yes, I have had the honour of making Madame Protassova's acquaintance. (*He shakes hands with LISA. They sit down.*) I have heard so much about you from my niece Nelly.

LISA.

We have always been great friends. (*Looking shyly at ANNA DMITRIEVNA.*) And we still are. (*To ANNA DMITRIEVNA.*) I did not expect you would want to see me.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

I knew your husband very well. He was a great friend of my son's, and often came to our

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house before he left for Tambov. I believe it was there he married you?

LISA.

Yes, we were married there.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

But afterwards, when he came back to Moscow, he stopped coming to see me.

LISA.

He used hardly to go anywhere.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

And he never brought you to me.

(An awkward silence.)

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

The last time I saw you was at an amateur performance at Denisov's. It was a charming affair. You were acting in the play.

LISA.

No — oh, yes, I acted. I had almost forgotten. *(Pause.)* Anna Dmitrievna, forgive me if what I am going to say displeases you. But I can't pretend; I am really unable to. I came because Victor Mikhailovich told me . . . because

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. . . he told me you would like to see me.
. . . But it is better if you tell me. . . .
(*Overpowered by tears.*) I am very unhappy,
and you are kind.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

I think I had better go.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Yes, go.

PRINCE APRESKOV.

Good-bye. (*He shakes hands with both the ladies, and goes out.*)

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Listen, Lisa . . . I don't know your father's name — No, no, no, that doesn't matter.

LISA.

Andreevna.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

No matter. Lisa! I pity you, I sympathise with you. But I love Victor. He is all I love on earth. I know his soul as if it was my own. He is proud. He was proud even as a boy of seven. He is proud not of his name, not of riches, but proud of his purity, his high ideals. He never swerved from them. He is as pure as an innocent girl.

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LISA.

I know.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

He has never loved a woman before. You are the first. I don't say I am not jealous of you — I am. Yes, I am. But we mothers — your son is still a baby, you can't know yet — we are prepared for it. I was prepared to surrender him to his future wife, and I made up my mind not to be jealous. But I expected her to be as pure as he is.

LISA.

I . . . Do you . . .

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Forgive me. I know it is not your fault. I know you are unhappy. But I know him. Now, he is ready to bear anything, and he will bear it without ever saying a word; but he will suffer. His pride will be wounded and will suffer, and he will never be happy.

LISA.

I have thought about that.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Lisa, dear! You are such a clever, good

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woman, and if you love him you certainly want his happiness more than your own. And if so, you can't wish to bind him so that he would be sorry afterwards. He would never, oh never, say so, but he would be.

LISA.

He would not, I know. I have thought so much about it, and have asked myself what I ought to do. I have discussed it with him quite openly. But what am I to do if he says he cannot live without me? I told him, let us be friends, but don't bind up your pure life with mine, which is wretched. But he does not see it from the same standpoint.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Of course, he would not at the moment.

LISA.

Persuade him not to marry me. I will agree. I only want his happiness, not mine. But help me! Don't hate me. Let us join in making him happy.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

I think I love you already. (*She kisses her.* LISA *bursts into tears.*) And yet it is so horrible. If only he had fallen in love with you before you married —

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LISA.

He says he loved me then, but thought it wrong to stand in the way of another man's happiness.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Oh, how unfortunate it all is! But let us love each other, and God will help us to attain what we wish.

VICTOR.

(*entering.*) Mother dear! I have heard all you have been talking about. I knew it would be so. I knew you would love her. So now everything will be all right.

LISA.

I am sorry you were listening. If I had known, I should not have spoken like that.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

But, after all, nothing is decided yet. All I can say is that I would have been very happy — if it had not been for all these sad circumstances. (*She kisses her.*)

VICTOR.

Don't change your mind, please — that is all I ask you.

SCENE II

A room in a cheap flat; a bed, writing-table, sofa are all the furniture. FEDIA is alone. There is a knock at the door. A Woman's voice is heard outside:—

Why have you locked yourself in, Fedor Vasilievich? Open the door, Fedia.

FEDIA.

(opening the door.) I am so glad you have come. I am so bored, so frightfully bored.

MASHA.

Why didn't you come to us? Drunk again?

FEDIA.

You know, I —

MASHA

Oh, what a fool I am to love you!

FEDIA.

Masha!

MASHA.

Masha, indeed! If you cared for me the least

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bit, you would have been divorced by now. They want it too — you know they do. You go on saying you don't love her, but you stick to her all the same. You don't want to be divorced. I can see that.

FEDIA.

You know why I don't.

MASHA.

Nonsense! People are perfectly right when they say there is no depending on you.

FEDIA.

What can I say? It hurts, your saying all that. You know it yourself.

MASHA.

Nothing can hurt you.

FEDIA.

You know perfectly well that my only joy in life is in your love.

MASHA.

My love is all right. But you — you don't love me.

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FEDIA.

You know I do. I don't need to tell you that.

MASHA.

Then why are you so cruel to me?

FEDIA.

Cruel? I? Can you say that?

MASHA.

(bursting into tears.) You are so unkind!

FEDIA.

(coming close to her and embracing her.) Don't cry, Masha! Don't cry. Life is worth living. Why be miserable? It is so unlike you, my beautiful one!

MASHA.

You do love me?

FEDIA.

Whom else could I love?

MASHA.

Me, only me? And now read what you have written.

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FEDIA.

It will bore you.

MASHA.

Anything you write must be fine.

FEDIA.

Well, listen. (*Reads.*) "Late in the autumn we decided, my friend and I, to meet at the Mari-gin fort. There stood a castle with small turrets. The night was dark and warm. The fog . . ."

(IVAN MAKAROVICH, *an old gipsy, and his wife*, NASTASSIA IVANOVNA — MASHA'S *parents* — *enter.*)

NASTASSIA IVANOVNA.

(*coming close to her daughter.*) Oh, you are here, you, cursed sheep! (*To FEDIA.*) No disrespect to you, sir. (*To MASHA.*) But you — how can you treat us like this?

IVAN MAKAROVICH.

(*to FEDIA.*) It's very wrong of you, sir, to ruin a girl. It's wrong, it's ugly.

NASTASSIA IVANOVNA.

Put on your shawl, and be gone from here. How did you dare to run away like that? What

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am I to say to the others? To keep company with a beggar! He can't give you a penny.

MASHA.

I have not done anything wrong. I love Fedor Vasilievich — that is all. I'm not abandoning the others. I will sing as before. But as to —

IVAN MAKAROVICH.

Shut up, or I will pull your hair out. You ought to respect your parents, you ought.— It's wicked of you to do that, sir! We all loved you; we pitied you. How many times we used to sing to you just for nothing! And that is how you behave!

NASTASSIA IVANOVNA.

You have ruined my daughter, my only one; my darling, my pearl, my priceless treasure! Dragged her down into the mud, that's what you have done! You've got no fear of God in your heart!

FEDIA.

Nastassia Ivanovna, you are mistaken. Don't think me wicked. I consider your daughter just like my sister. I hold her honour dear. Don't be afraid. I love her, that is true. But that can't be helped.

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IVAN MAKAROVICH.

Why did you not love her when you had money? You ought to have paid down ten thousand roubles to us, and then you could have had her without any disgrace. That is what all respectable men do. But to steal her away like that, after having squandered all you had! You ought to be ashamed, sir.

MASHA.

He did not take me away, I came to him. And, if you take me away from him now, I will come back. I love him — that's all. Lock me up! My love will be stronger than all your bolts. I won't obey you.

NASTASSIA IVANOVNA.

Don't be cross, Mashenka, darling. You have done wrong. Now do come with us.

IVAN MAKAROVICH.

Shut up, Masha. (*He takes her by the hand.*)
Good-bye, sir.

(*All three go out together.*)

PRINCE ABRESKOV comes in.)

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Forgive me. I have been — quite by chance — a witness of this unpleasant incident.

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FEDIA.

With whom have I the honour — (*Recognising him.*) Oh, Prince Sergius Dmitrievich!

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

I have been the witness of what has just occurred. I did not desire to hear, but as I did hear, I am bound in duty to tell you so. I was shown in — the loudness of the voices evidently drowned my repeated knocking — consequently I had to wait till your visitors were gone.

FEDIA.

Oh, that's all right. Won't you sit down? I'm obliged to you for telling me, as it gives me an opportunity to explain to you what it was all about. What you think of me does not in the least concern me. But I should tell you this girl, a young gipsy singer, has done nothing to deserve the scene you witnessed. She is as pure as a dove. And my only relations with her are friendly — friendly, and nothing more. Poetical they may be — that does not affect her purity, her honour. I am glad to have told you that. But tell me, what is it you want of me? What can I do for you?

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

I must tell you first of all —

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FEDIA.

Forgive me, Prince. My position in society is now such that my having known you slightly long ago does not entitle me to a visit from you without some special reason for your wanting to see me. What is that reason?

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

You are quite right — I will not deny there is. I have come for a special reason. But I beg you to believe that whatever change there may be in your social position, it does not affect my esteem for you.

FEDIA.

I am quite sure of that.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Well, what I have to say is that the son of my old friend, Anna Dmitrievna Karenina, and she herself, have asked me to apply directly to you in order to know what your relations are now — if you allow me to speak of the matter — with your wife, Elizaveta Andreevna Protassova.

FEDIA.

My relations with my wife, my former wife I may say, have entirely ceased.

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PRINCE ABRESKOV.

So I understood. And that is why I consented to come upon so delicate a mission.

FEDIA.

Let me hasten to add that the fault is not hers, but mine; in fact, my faults are endless. She remains what she always has been, the most spotless of wives and of women.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Victor Karenin, and especially his mother, are anxious to know what you intend to do now. I am to ask you about that.

FEDIA.

(*excitedly.*) I have no intentions whatever. I leave my wife entirely free. I wish it to be understood that I will never stand in her way in anything. I know she loves Victor Karenin, and I have no objection at all. I think him rather a bore, but a perfectly nice and respectable man; and I am sure — as the saying is — that she will be happy with him. And God bless them. That is all I have to say.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Yes, but we —

FEDIA.

(*interrupting him.*) Don't imagine I am in the least jealous. I said Victor was a bore, but I take that back. He is an excellent, an honest, and moral man — almost the exact opposite of me. He has loved her from her youth up. Perhaps she was in love with him too when she became my wife. This has been her real love, the one of which people are often not aware. And I think she never ceased to love him, though being an honest woman, she did not confess it even to herself. But it has hovered as something of a shadow over our married life. . . . No, really, I think I ought not to make such confessions to you.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Please don't stop short of anything you can tell me. Believe me, my real object in coming to you was just to gain a clear insight into your relations with your wife. I quite understand what you mean. I see that a sort of shadow, as you have so well put it, may have existed.

FEDIA.

Yes, it existed; and perhaps that is why I was not satisfied with my life at home. I kept trying to find satisfaction elsewhere, and indulged in all

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sorts of passions. Why talk about it? I must seem to you to be trying to exculpate myself, and I don't want that. Besides, there is no excuse whatever for me. I have been a bad husband. I say I *have been*, now I no longer am her husband. I consider her entirely free. That is my answer, which you may take back to them.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

That is very well, but you know the principles of Victor and his mother. His relations with Elizaveta Andreevna have been throughout most respectful and distant, and remain so now. He has tried to help her in her troubles — that is all.

FEDIA.

Yes, and my vices have only helped their intimacy to ripen. Well, I suppose it could not be helped.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

You know the strict religious principles of Victor and his mother. I don't agree with them on that point. I have broader views. But I understand and respect their feelings. I understand that he, and his mother even more than he, could not think of his union with a woman without the consecration of the church.

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FEDIA.

Yes, I know how conservative he is in that respect. But what do they want? Divorce? I have already told them that I consent to be divorced. But to plead guilty, and pass through all the lies connected with the proceedings — that would be hard indeed.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

I quite agree with you. Only there is no choice left. We must manage it somehow. But, of course, you are quite right, and I understand you.

FEDIA.

(*pressing his hand.*) Thank you, my dear Prince, thank you. I always knew you were kind and just. Tell me, what ought I to do? Consider my position. I don't pretend to be better than I really am. I am a scoundrel. But there are things which I cannot do calmly. I cannot tell lies.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

I must say you are a puzzle to me. You are a gifted, a clever man, with a fine sense of moral duty. How could you have been so carried away by your passions? How could you forget what was due to yourself? How has your life come to this point? Why, why have you ruined yourself?

FEDIA.

(*mastering his tears.*) For the past ten years I have led my present dissipated life, and for the first time I find a man like you to pity me. My friends, rakes like myself, pity me, women pity me; but a clever, a kind man like you . . . ! Thank you! How have I ruined myself? In the first place — alcohol. It is not that I enjoy the taste of wine. But it prevents one thinking. When I think, or when my senses are awake, I feel that everything is different from what it ought to be, and I am ashamed. I am ashamed now in talking to you. Anything like being an official, or having a place in a bank — seems to me absolutely shameful. Well, the moment I begin to drink, my shame is gone. And then music — not operas or Beethoven, but gipsy songs — fills you with new energy, makes you live a new life. And when a pair of black eyes and a smiling face are near you — But the more entrancing it all is, the more you feel ashamed afterwards.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

And work?

FEDIA.

I have tried. No work satisfies me. But don't let us talk about me. Anyhow, I thank you with all my heart.

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PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Well, what answer am I to take them?

FEDIA.

Tell them I am willing to do as they wish. They want to marry, and there must be nothing in their way. That is so?

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Yes, of course.

FEDIA.

I will see to it. Tell them I will; they may rely on me.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

When?

FEDIA.

Wait a moment — let us say they will be free in a fortnight. Will that do?

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

May I say that you give them your word?

FEDIA.

You may. Good-bye, Prince. Thank you once more.

(PRINCE ABRESKOV *goes out.*)

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FEDIA.

(sits a long while silent, then smiles.) Good, good! That's right. That's right. Very good indeed.

ACT IV

SCENE I

A private room in a restaurant. FEDIA is shown in by a WAITER.

WAITER.

This way, sir. You will be all by yourself; no one will disturb you. I will bring you some paper at once.

IVAN PETROVICH ALEXANDROV.

(appearing in the doorway.) Protassov, do you mind if I come in?

FEDIA.

(very serious.) You may, if you like. But I am busy, and — All right, come in.

IVAN PETROVICH.

You are going to write an answer to their demands. I will tell you what you ought to tell

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them. Don't you spare them. To say straight out what you mean, and to act resolutely; that's my system.

FEDIA.

(to the waiter.) A bottle of champagne.
(The WAITER goes out.)

FEDIA.

(taking a revolver out of his pocket and putting it on the table.) Wait a bit.

IVAN PETROVICH.

What's that? Going to shoot yourself? Of course! Why not? I understand you. They mean to humiliate you, and you will show them who you are — put a bullet through your head and crush them by your magnanimity. I understand you. I understand everything and everybody, because I am a genius.

FEDIA.

Yes, of course. But —

(The WAITER returns with ink and paper.)

FEDIA.

(putting a napkin over the revolver.) Open the bottle. *(The WAITER opens the bottle, then*

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goes.) Let us have a drink first. (*They drink. FEDIA sits down and begins to write a letter.*) Wait a moment.

IVAN PETROVICH.

I drink to your — great journey. I am above that. I won't try to dissuade you. Life and death are all the same to me. I die in life, and I live in death. You want to kill yourself, so that those two may be sorry for it and miss you badly. And I — I will kill myself for the world to realise what it has lost. I won't hesitate; I won't consider and reconsider it. I will just take the revolver (*snatching the revolver from the table.*) One, two — and all will be over. But the right moment has not yet come. (*He puts the revolver back.*) And why should I instruct them? They ought to understand things by themselves. Oh, you. . . .

FEDIA.

(*writing.*) Wait a moment.

IVAN PETROVICH.

Contemptible creatures, who fuss about and understand nothing! Nothing whatever! I'm not speaking to you — I'm only expressing my thoughts to myself. And what is it that humanity is in need of? Not much; only to prize its gen-

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iuses instead of persecuting them as it does, and making their life a perpetual agony. No; I won't be your plaything any more. I will denounce you all, hypocrites that you are!

FEDIA.

(*having finished his letter, drinks a glass of champagne, and reads what he has written.*) Now please, go!

IVAN PETROVICH.

Go? All right, I'll go. Anyhow, I don't hold you back from what you have decided to do. I shall do so too. But the time has not yet come. I only wanted to tell you —

FEDIA.

All right, you can tell me later. Now listen: will you, please, give this to the manager (*handing him some money*), and ask him for a letter and a parcel that have probably been sent here in my name? Will you do that?

IVAN PETROVICH.

I will. Then you promise to wait for me? I will tell you something very important, something the like of which you will not hear, neither in this world nor in that to come — at least, not till I get there. Am I to give him all this money?

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FEDIA.

Let him take what I owe him.

(IVAN PETROVICH goes out.)

FEDIA.

(sighs with a sense of relief, locks the door, takes the revolver, cocks it, puts it close to his temple, then shivers, and lets his hand drop with great precaution. Groans.) No, I cannot, I cannot!

(There is a knock at the door.)

Who is there?

MASHA's voice outside.

It is I.

FEDIA.

Who: "I?" Oh, Masha! *(He opens the door.)*

MASHA.

(entering.) I called at your place, then at Popov's, at Afremov's, and then I thought, at last, I might find you here. *(Seeing the revolver.)* Ah, what's that? You fool! You regular fool! Could you really —

FEDIA.

No, I could *not*.

MASHA.

And I? Am I something to you or not? You

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heartless wretch! You have no pity for me! It is a great sin, Fedor Vasilievich, to treat me like that. A great sin! That is what I get now for all my love!

FEDIA.

I wanted to release them. I promised to. And I can't tell lies.

MASHA.

And what about me?

FEDIA.

Oh, you! You would have felt it a deliverance too. Is it better for you to go on being so miserable on account of me?

MASHA.

Of course it is. I cannot live without you.

FEDIA.

And with me your life is no life at all. When I was dead, you would have cried over me, but after a while you would feel much the better for my loss.

MASHA.

I shouldn't have cried at all. The devil may take you for all I care, if you have no pity for me.
(*She bursts into tears.*)

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FEDIA.

Masha, darling! I only thought it would have been better.

MASHA.

Better for you, I dare say.

FEDIA.

(*smiling.*) Why for me? I was going to kill myself.

MASHA.

It's just selfishness, that's all. But I wish I knew what you wanted.

FEDIA.

What? A great many things.

MASHA.

Well, what?

FEDIA.

First of all, I must keep my promise. All alone, this is too much for me. How can I tell lies? How can I stand all the ugliness of the divorce? How can I?

MASHA.

There you are right. It is ugly. I myself —

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FEDIA.

And then they have to be delivered in some way or other. No doubt of that. My wife and he must be free. They are kind, good people, both of them. Why must they suffer? That is my second reason.

MASHA.

I don't think she's as kind as that, if she has forsaken you.

FEDIA.

It was all my fault, not hers.

MASHA.

Your fault, indeed! Everything is your fault — of course, she is an angel. Well, what else is there?

FEDIA.

Well, this. You are a good girl — yes, you are. And if I live, I shall make you miserable.

MASHA.

That is no concern of yours. I am lost anyhow. I know that.

FEDIA.

(*sighing.*) And the chief, the very chief reason, lies in myself. You think I don't see that I am

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good for nothing, a burden to everybody and to myself too, as your father said. I am no good.

MASHA.

Nonsense! You won't get me to leave you. I shall stick to you, and there is an end of it. And as to your leading a bad life, drinking and smoking — you are a living soul. Change; give it all up.

FEDIA.

It's easy for you to say it.

MASHA.

Do as I say.

FEDIA.

When I look at your face, I think I could do everything you ask me.

MASHA.

And you will. You will do it all. (*She sees the letter.*) What is that? You've written to them. What have you said?

FEDIA.

I wrote what I had to. (*He takes the letter, is about to tear it.*) Now it is of no use.

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MASHA.

(*snatching the letter from him.*) You've written that you were going to kill yourself? Did you say you would shoot yourself, or just kill yourself, without saying how?

FEDIA.

I've written that I won't live any longer.

MASHA.

Give me that letter. Have you read the famous novel, "What are We to Do?"

FEDIA.

I think I have.

MASHA.

It's not an entertaining book, I must say, but one thing I liked in it. Do you remember that man — what is his name? Ramanov — who made-believe he was drowned? You can't swim, can you?

FEDIA.

No.

MASHA.

Very good, then. Give me your coat. Give me your notebook, and all those things.

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FEDIA.

What an idea!

MASHA.

No, wait. Let us go home, and you will put on other clothes.

FEDIA.

But that will be a fraud.

MASHA.

Let it be a fraud. You went to have a bathe in the river; you left your clothes on the bank. The notebook and this letter will be found in your pocket.

FEDIA.

And then?

MASHA.

Then? Then we'll clear out, and will begin a new and happy life.

IVAN PETROVICH.

(*returning.*) I say! May I take the revolver?

MASHA.

Yes, take it. We are off.

SCENE II

The drawing-room at LISA PROTASSOVA'S.

KARENIN.

He promised so definitely that I was sure he would keep his word.

LISA.

I feel ashamed to say it, but really, hearing of that gipsy girl has made me feel quite free from him. Don't think I was jealous. No, I simply felt free. And—I don't know how to put it into words, Victor Mikhailovich—

KARENIN.

(*smiling.*) Why do you speak to me in that formal way?

LISA.

Well then, Victor. But don't interrupt me. I want to tell you exactly how I feel. What distressed me most of all was that I somehow felt I loved two men at the same time. It seemed to me so wicked, so frightfully immoral.

KARENIN.

Immoral! You immoral!

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LISA.

But since I have come to know that there was another woman he loved, and that he has no more need of me, I feel quite free. I know now that I can tell you truly that I love you, and you alone. Now my mind is perfectly clear. I only suffer from my position. This divorce is so awful. And how agonising to wait for it!

KARENIN.

All that will be over presently. He has promised to do all that is necessary; and besides, I asked the secretary of the Synod to call on him with the petition, and not to go before he has signed it. If I did not know him as well as I do, I should have thought he was dragging the whole business out on purpose.

LISA.

Oh no, indeed he is not. It is only that he is so weak and so honest. He was always so. He hates saying what is untrue. But I am sorry you have sent him money. You ought not to have done that.

KARENIN.

I had to. Want of money for expenses would have meant further delay.

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LISA.

Yes, but it is so unpleasant.

KARENIN.

I don't think he has any right to be fastidious.

LISA.

What egoists we are becoming.

KARENIN.

That is true — but then, it is partly your fault. You made me wait so long, you have driven me to such despair, that now I can't help saying how happy I am. Happiness is very selfish. That is your fault, darling.

LISA.

Do you think it is only you who feel happy? I do too. I am full of bliss, overwhelmed by it. Now my boy has recovered, and your mother is fond of me, and you — and what makes my greatest joy — I love you so dearly.

KARENIN.

Do you? You won't have any regrets? You won't go back on your decision?

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LISA.

No. Ever since that day I have been a changed being.

KARENIN.

You won't change back again?

LISA.

Never, never. My only wish is that you should forget the past as completely as I have done.

(The NURSE enters with the boy, who goes to his mother. She takes him on her knees.)

KARENIN.

What a miserable thing man's nature is!

LISA.

Why do you say that? *(She kisses the child.)*

KARENIN.

When you married, and I heard about it on my return from abroad and was so unhappy because I had lost you, it was at least a great joy to learn that you just remembered me. That was enough for me. After that, when we became friends and

you were kind to me — when I felt that there was just a spark of something more than mere friendship in our relations — I was almost happy. I was only afraid — and I suffered from it a good deal — that it was unfair to Fedia. But as I was firmly convinced there could not be anything more than pure friendship between me and the wife of my friend — and besides, I knew what you were — I was not greatly disturbed. On the whole I was content. Then, when Fedia began to cause you so much trouble, and I felt that I was your support and that you somehow feared my friendship, I was completely happy, and a vague hope arose in my soul. And when Fedia became quite impossible and you resolved to leave him, when I told you for the first time I loved you and you did not say “No,” but left me in tears, then my happiness was complete. If anybody had asked me then what I desired more, I should have answered, Nothing. But after that, the possibility arose of uniting my life with yours; my mother grew fond of you, my hope began to be realised. You told me you loved me before, and you go on loving me; now you say he does not exist for you and you love only me — what else could I wish? But no, just now I suffer because of the past. I wish it had not existed, I wish there were nothing that could remind me of him.

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LISA.

(*reproachfully.*) O Victor!

KARENIN.

Forgive me, Lisa. If I tell you all this, it is because I ought not to have a thought that I hide from you. I tell you to show you how bad I am; to show you that I know I must overcome such feelings. And I have already overcome them. I love him.

LISA.

I am so glad. I did all I could. And I can't help it if my heart underwent the change that you longed for. There is nothing left in it — except you.

KARENIN.

Nothing but me?

LISA.

Nothing. Or else I would not say so.

SERVANT.

(*entering.*) Mr. Vosnessensky.

KARENIN.

Oh, he must have Fedia's answer.

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LISA.

(to KARENIN.) Ask him in.

(*The SERVANT goes out.*)

KARENIN.

(*rising and going to the door.*) You see, the answer has come at once.

LISA.

(*passing the child to the NURSE.*) I can hardly believe, Victor, that it will be settled as we wish.

(*She kisses the child. NURSE takes it away.*)

(*VOSNESSENSKY enters.*)

KARENIN.

Well?

VOSNESSENSKY.

He was not in.

KARENIN.

Not in? Then the petition is not yet signed?

VOSNESSENSKY.

No; it is not. But there is a letter from him, addressed to you and Elizaveta Andreevna.
(*He takes a letter out of his pocket and gives it*

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to KARENIN.) I called at his house, and was told that he had gone to a restaurant. They gave me the address. I went there and found Fedor Vasilievich, who asked me to call for the answer in an hour. I called and —

KARENIN.

This is too bad! He is trying again to gain time by inventing all sorts of excuses. How low he has sunk!

LISA.

Read the letter. What does he say?

(KARENIN *opens the letter.*)

VOSNESSENSKY.

Do you want me any more?

KARENIN.

No. Good-bye. I thank you for — (*He stops in the middle of the sentence, amazed by what he reads in the letter.*)

(VOSNESSENSKY *goes out.*)

LISA.

What is the matter? What is in that letter?

KARENIN.

Horrible! Horrible!

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LISA.

(rushing to seize the letter.) Read it to me!

KARENIN.

(reading.) "Lisa and Victor, I write to you both. I am not going to lie, and call you 'dear' and the like. I cannot master a feeling of bitterness; I cannot help reproaching — not you, of course, but myself — when I think of you, of your love, your happiness. And I am wretched, because that is an accusation of myself. I know Victor. I know that, in spite of my being the husband, it is I who am the intruder. I stood in your way, I am the cause of all your troubles. And yet I cannot help feeling bitter and disliking both of you. At a distance I love you both, particularly Lisa, darling Lisa — but when I think of you closely, I feel worse than indifferent. I know I am wrong, but I cannot change."

LISA.

What is all that for?

KARENIN.

(continuing.) "But all this is not to the point. What I am going to tell you is this: a change in my feelings has made me fulfil your wish in a dif-

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ferent way from what you desired. To lie, to act a disgusting comedy, to bribe the consistory officials — the ugliness of all that is distasteful to me. I am a bad man myself, but not in that way. I cannot be a party to such low, dirty tricks. I simply am *unable* to. The other issue on which I have decided is the very simplest: you must marry — that is the only way for you to be happy. I am in your way — consequently, I must disappear."

LISA.

(*snatching KARENIN's hand.*) Victor!

KARENIN.

(*reading.*) "I must disappear. And so I will. When this letter reaches you I shall be no more. P.S.— I am sorry you have sent me money for divorce expenses. This is unpleasant, and unlike you. But that cannot be mended now. I have done so many shabby things in my life; well, now it's your turn for once in a way. The money shall be sent back to you. The way I have found to settle things is much shorter and cheaper, and it is the surest one. I ask you only not to be angry with me, and not to think badly of me. And there is one thing more. I know a poor man, the watch-maker Eugene. Could you help him? He is a

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weak man, but very honest and good. Good-bye. Fedia."

LISA.

He has killed himself!

KARENIN.

(*rings the bell and runs to the hall.*) Ask Mr. Vosnessensky to come back.

LISA.

I knew that would be the end. Fedia! Fedia darling!

KARENIN.

Lisa!

LISA.

It is not true I ceased to love him! I love him alone, and nobody else. And I have brought him to his end. Leave me alone!

(VOSNESSENSKY *returns.*)

KARENIN.

Where is Fedor Vasilievich? What did they tell you?

VOSNESSENSKY.

They told me he had gone out in the morning, leaving this letter, and had not come back.

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KARENIN.

I must find out. I leave you, Lisa.

LISA.

Don't be angry with me. I can't lie either.
Leave me now. Try, try to find out.

ACT V

SCENE I

A dirty room in a cheap restaurant.

(People are sitting around the table, drinking tea and vodka. Near the front a small table, at which is sitting FEDIA. He is in rags, and has fallen very low. By his side is PETUSHKOV, a delicate, keen-faced man, with long hair, spiritual face. Both are slightly tipsy.)

PETUSHKOV.

I quite understand. This is real love. Well, go on.

FEDIA.

Of course we could expect a girl of our class to feel like that, to sacrifice everything for the man

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she loves. But this girl is a gipsy, educated to care only for money and to squeeze it out of every one. And yet she has this pure disinterested love. She gives everything without asking for anything in return. It's the contrast of it that strikes me most.

PETUSHKOV.

Yes, that's what we painters call "les valeurs." To produce the exact impression of scarlet, you must have green round it. Well, that is not the point. I understand.

FEDIA.

The only good I have done in life is that I have not taken advantage of her love. And do you know why?

PETUSHKOV.

Was it because you pitied her?

FEDIA.

No, no. I did not pity her. But I had a sort of admiration for her. And when she used to sing — oh, how wonderfully she sang, and probably sings now! — not only then, but always, I looked up to her. I have not ruined her life, simply because I loved her truly. And now she is simply a dear, a very dear memory to me. (*He drinks.*)

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PETUSHKOV.

I understand. You are a true idealist.

FEDIA.

Now listen. I have had other passions in my life. Once I was very much in love with a pretty woman — basely, vilely, like a dog. She gave me a rendezvous. I did not go. And why? Because of her husband; I felt I could not behave meanly to him. The strange thing is that when I remember that I want to feel glad, and to be satisfied with myself for having behaved like an honest man; instead, I repent as if I committed a sin. With Masha it is just the contrary. I rejoice at not having polluted my love. However low I may fall, for whatever mean trifles I sell my life, though I am covered with vermin and mange, this diamond will remain untarnished, this ray of sunlight will shine for ever in my soul.

PETUSHKOV.

I understand. Where is she now?

FEDIA.

I don't know. I don't want to know. All that belongs to the past. I don't want to mix it with my present life.

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(At the table behind them a WOMAN screams. The MANAGER comes with a policeman, and they take her away. FEDIA and PETUSHKOV watch them, listen, and are silent.)

PETUSHKOV.

(when all is silent again.) Yes, your life is a very wonderful one.

FEDIA.

Oh no, it is quite simple. In our class — the one in which I was born — three courses only are open to a man; the first is to go into the government service, to make money and to increase the ugliness of the life round you. This was disgusting to me, or perhaps I was simply unfit for it; but disgust was the stronger motive. The second course is to destroy the ugly conditions of life. But only heroes can do that, and I am not a hero. The third issue is to drink in order to forget, to indulge in dissipation, and to sing. That was my choice — I sang, and you see what end my singing has led me to. *(He drinks.)*

PETUSHKOV.

And marriage? Home life? I should have been happy if I had a good wife. My wife was the cause of my ruin.

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FEDIA.

Home life? Oh yes, my wife was an ideal one. She is still alive. But, don't you know, there was no sparkle in her. You know how, in order to make kvass fizz, they put a currant into the bottle. Well, that currant was lacking in our life. It did not sparkle. That is why I tried to find oblivion somehow. I began to behave disgracefully. And you know, I dare say, that we love those who surround us just for the good we are doing them, and our dislikes are caused by the evil we do them. I wronged her greatly. She seemed to love me.

PETUSHKOV.

Why do you say "seemed?"

FEDIA.

I say so because she somehow could not creep into my heart, as Masha did. But I don't want to speak about that. There were times when she was going to have a baby, or when she was nursing, and I stayed away for days and came home quite drunk. Of course, that was why I loved her less and less. (*Ecstatically.*) Oh, I know, I realise it only at this very moment: the reason why I love Masha is that I did her good, and not evil.

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That's it. And the other one I actually tormented, and did not love. I simply did not love her. I was jealous for a time, but that was soon over.

(A MAN approaches, ARTEMIEV by name, dressed in a shabby but carefully mended coat; his moustaches are dyed, and he wears an order on his coat.)

ARTEMIEV.

Good appetite, gentlemen. *(Bowing to FEDIA.)* You have made the acquaintance of our artist?

FEDIA.

(coolly.) Yes, I have.

ARTEMIEV.

(to PETUSHKOV.) Have you finished that portrait you were commissioned to paint?

PETUSHKOV.

No; I didn't get the commission after all.

ARTEMIEV.

(Sitting down.) You don't mind my sitting here with you?

(FEDIA and PETUSHKOV remain silent.)

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PETUSHKOV.

Fedor Vasilievich was telling me about his life.

ARTEMIEV.

Oh, secrets? I won't disturb you. Go on. I don't want you. Pigs! (*He goes to the next table, sits down and orders beer. He listens to the talk of the other two.*)

FEDIA.

I don't like that man.

PETUSHKOV.

He is offended.

FEDIA.

I don't care. I cannot stand people like that. I know I couldn't open my mouth in his presence. It's different with you — I feel quite at my ease. Well, what was I saying?

PETUSHKOV.

You were speaking about your jealousy. How did you part with your wife?

FEDIA.

Oh, that! (*A pause.*) It is altogether a very strange story. My wife has married.

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PETUSHKOV.

How's that? Are you divorced?

FEDIA.

No. (*He smiles.*) She is a widow.

PETUSHKOV.

A widow? What do you mean?

FEDIA.

I mean what I say. She is a widow. I do not exist.

PETUSHKOV.

I don't understand.

FEDIA.

Don't you? I am dead. Yes, that's it. ,
(*ARTEMIEV leans towards them
and listens intently.*)

Well, I think I may tell you. It happened a long time ago; and, besides, you don't know who I really am. That is how it happened: I was making my wife totally miserable, I had squandered everything I could lay hands on; in fact, I had become intolerable. Well, a man came forward to protect my wife. Don't imagine anything wicked and mean. He was a friend of

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mine, a very good man, very straightforward, the exact opposite of me. And as there is much more bad than good in me, he, being the contrary of me, is the ideal of a good man: honest, firm, abstemious, virtuous in all respects. He knew my wife from the time she was quite a child. He was in love with her when she married me, and he bore his fate patiently. But after I had become disreputable, and she was in great straits, he came oftener to our house. I liked him to myself. She fell in love with her old friend, while I only behaved worse and worse, and then left my wife altogether. At that time I was madly in love with Masha. I proposed myself that they should marry. They did not want to. I went on misbehaving, and finally, of course —

PETUSHKOV.

The usual thing in this world!

FEDIA.

No. I feel sure that their love remained pure. I know it did. He is very religious, and marriage without the sanction of the Church is a sin in his eyes. Well, they wanted me to get a divorce, and I agreed to it. I was to plead guilty. But, oh! all the lies I would have had to tell. I could not

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face it. I wonder whether you can believe it, but really I preferred killing myself to telling lies. I was on the point of doing so when a kind friend showed me that it was quite unnecessary. We did, accordingly, something quite different. I sent a farewell letter — and the next day my clothes and my notebook were found on the bank. I don't swim — that was known.

PETUSHKOV.

But how could they believe you dead if your body had not been found?

FEDIA.

It was found. Just imagine! A week after, some body or other was dragged out of the water. My wife was sent for to identify it as mine. It was quite decomposed. She looked at it. "Is that he?" they asked. "Yes, it is." That settled it. I have been buried; they married, live here in this town, and are very happy indeed. And you see what has become of me. I live and drink. Yesterday I passed their house. The windows were lit; some one's shadow passed across the window. Sometimes I feel very wretched, but at others I am all right. The worst is when I have no cash. (*He drinks.*)

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ARTEMIEV.

(*approaching them.*) Excuse me, but you know I have been listening to that story of yours. A very entertaining one it is — and, the best of it is, a very profitable one. You say you dislike having no money. That is highly unpleasant, no doubt. And in your position you ought always to have lots of cash. You are dead, you say. Stone-dead, eh? Well —

FEDIA.

Look here, I did not tell *you* anything, and I am in no need of any advice from you.

ARTEMIEV.

But I want to give you a bit of advice. You are dead, aren't you? Well, if it were found out that you were alive, then those two, your wife and the man she's so happy with now, would be condemned for bigamy. The least sentence they could get would be deportation. Then why should you be short of money?

FEDIA.

Will you please leave me alone?

ARTEMIEV.

Just write them a letter. And if you don't

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want to, let me write. Give me only their address, and you'll be grateful to me.

FEDIA.

Get away from here, I say. I did not tell you anything.

ARTEMIEV.

You did. I have a witness. The waiter here heard you saying you were dead.

WAITER.

I don't know anything about it.

FEDIA.

You wretch!

ARTEMIEV.

I am a wretch? Waiter, call a policeman. I'll let the authorities know about this.

(FEDIA rises to go. ARTEMIEV holds him back. A POLICEMAN enters.)

SCENE II

In the country. A terrace hung with ivy.

(ANNA DMITRIEVNA KARE-

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NINA is talking with LISA (*en-
ceinte.*) The NURSE and LISA's
Boy.

LISA.

He is already on his way from the station by
now.

Boy.

Who's coming?

LISA.

Father.

Boy.

Oh, father's coming!

LISA.

*C'est étonnant comme il l'aime. Tout à fait
comme son père.*

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

*Tant mieux. Se souvient-il de son père verit-
able?*

LISA.

(*sighing.*) I haven't told him. I think it would
only confuse him. But sometimes I feel I ought
to. What do you think, mama?

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

It all depends on what you feel about it, Lisa.
If you follow the suggestion of your own heart,

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you will know when and what you ought to say. How wonderfully death reconciles us with those who are gone! I must confess there was a time when I simply hated Fedia — whom I knew as a boy. And now I just think of him only as a pleasant young man, Victor's friend. What an impulsive man he was! Of course, what he did was against the law, against religion. But all the same he sacrificed his life for those he loved. You may say what you like the action was a fine one. (*A pause.*) I hope Victor will not forget to bring me the wool. I shall soon have none left. (*She knits.*)

LISA.

There he comes.

(The sound of approaching wheels and the tinkling of small bells attached to the harness is heard. She rises and goes to the end of the terrace.)

He is not alone. I see a lady's hat at his side. Oh, that is mother! I have not seen her for ages. (*She goes to the door and meets KARENIN and ANNA PAVLOVNA.*)

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

(kissing LISA and ANNA DMITRIEVNA.) Victor met me and brought me with him.

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ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

That is nice.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

I thought I had better come, so as not to put off my visit again. Here I am, and I'll stay till the evening train, if you don't mind.

KARENIN.

(Kissing his wife, the mother, and the boy.)
Congratulate me, all of you. I am so happy. I shan't have to go to town again for two days. They can manage without me to-morrow.

LISA.

Oh, how nice! Two days. It's so long since we've seen anything of you. Suppose we drive over to the hermitage. What do you say?

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

How like his father the boy is. And what a fine little fellow! I only wish he mayn't have inherited everything from his father: he has his kind heart.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

But not his weak will.

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LISA.

He is like him in everything. Victor quite agrees with me that if Fedia had come under a good influence when he was young —

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

I don't understand all that. But I cannot think of Fedia without tears.

LISA.

We all feel just the same. We hold him far dearer in our memory than we did when he was alive.

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Yes, indeed.

LISA.

How hopeless it all seemed at one time, and then on a sudden all the difficulties were solved.

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

(*to her son.*) Well, Victor, have you brought me some wool?

KARENIN.

Yes, I have. (*Taking some parcels out of his bag.*) There is your wool and the eau-de-Cologne, and here are the letters. A letter for you,

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Lisa, with a magistrate's seal. (*He hands the letter to LISA.*) Well, Anna Pavlovna, if you care to tidy up, let me show you your room. I must go and wash after our drive; dinner will soon be ready. Lisa, shall I show Anna Pavlovna into the corner room downstairs?

(*LISA, quite pale, holds the letter with trembling hands and reads it.*)

KARENIN.

What is it, Lisa? What is in that letter?

LISA.

He is alive! O God, when shall I be free from him? O Victor, what does it all mean? (*She breaks into sobs.*)

KARENIN.

(*taking the letter and reading.*) Horrible!

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

What has happened? Tell me — tell me what it is!

KARENIN.

It is awful. He is alive. She is accused of bigamy, and I am a criminal too. This letter is from the investigating magistrate, who summons Lisa to him.

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ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

Horrible wretch! Why did he do it?

KARENIN.

It was all a lie — a lie!

LISA.

Oh, how I hate him! — I don't know what I am saying.

(She goes into the house in tears. KARENIN follows her.)

ANNA PAVLOVNA.

Is it really possible he is alive? How can it be?

ANNA DMITRIEVNA.

I have always felt — that from the moment Victor came into touch with them, they were bound to drag him down into the mire. And they have. They are all lies — lies and deceit!

ACT VI

SCENE I

(The INVESTIGATING MAGISTRATE'S office.)

(The MAGISTRATE sits at the

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*table, talking with MELNIKOV.
His CLERK is looking through a
pile of paper.)*

MAGISTRATE.

I never told her that. She invented it all, and now she reproaches me.

MELNIKOV.

She does not reproach you, but she is hurt.

MAGISTRATE.

Well, I will come to dinner. Just now I have an interesting case. (*To the CLERK.*) Call them in, please.

CLERK.

Both?

MAGISTRATE.

(*finishing a cigarette.*) No, first Madame Karenina, or, rather, Madame Protassova, to call her by her first name.

MELNIKOV.

Oh, it is Madame Karenina.

MAGISTRATE.

Yes, an ugly business. I am only beginning the inquiry, but I can see it is a bad business. Well, good-bye.

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(MELNIKOV goes out.

The CLERK goes out and fetches
LISA. She is in a black dress and
black veil.)

MAGISTRATE.

Be seated, please. (*He points to the chair at the side of his table. LISA sits down.*) I am very sorry, believe me, to have to question you. But it is my duty. Be perfectly quiet, please. You have the right not to answer questions if you do not want to. But I should advise you not to conceal the truth — this is by far the best for you and for all the others. From the practical point of view the truth will be far the best policy.

LISA.

I have nothing to conceal.

MAGISTRATE.

(*looking in the paper before him.*) Your rank? Religion? I have that down already. I suppose it is correct? (*He shows her the paper.*)

LISA.

(*reading.*) Yes.

MAGISTRATE.

You are charged with having contracted a sec-

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ond marriage, well knowing that your first husband was alive.

LISA.

I did *not* know it.

MAGISTRATE.

And also with having bribed your first husband to pretend that he had committed suicide, in order that you might regain your freedom.

LISA.

That is all false.

MAGISTRATE.

Allow me to put to you a few questions. In July last, did you send him twelve hundred roubles?

LISA.

The money belonged to him. It was the sum produced by the sale of different things he left. When I parted with him, and was waiting for the divorce, I sent him this money.

MAGISTRATE.

Very well. This money was sent the 17th of July, that is, two days before he disappeared.

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LISA.

I think that was the date. But I don't quite remember.

MAGISTRATE.

Now, why was your lawyer instructed to withdraw your petition for a divorce at precisely that time?

LISA.

I don't know.

MAGISTRATE.

Very well. Now, when the police asked you to examine the corpse, how did it happen that you identified it as being that of your husband?

LISA.

I was so much upset that I did not look at the corpse. I was so certain it was he that when they asked me whether it was I said I thought it was.

MAGISTRATE.

You did not examine the corpse, because you were in a state of great agitation. That is easily understood. Very well. But may I ask why you sent by post every month a certain sum of money to Saratov, the town where your first husband resided?

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LISA.

It was my husband who sent that money. I cannot tell you to whom. It was a secret of his and not of mine. I can only assure you that it was not sent to Fedor Vasilievich. We were firmly convinced that he was dead. That is an absolute fact.

MAGISTRATE.

Very well. Permit me only to say, madam, that although we are servants of the law that does not prevent us from being humane. Believe me, I quite understand the sadness of your position, and have the greatest sympathy for your troubles. You were tied to a man who squandered your property, who was unfaithful; who, in short, made you miserable.

LISA.

I loved him.

MAGISTRATE.

Of course. Still it was quite natural for you to desire your liberty, and you chose this simple way without thinking that it might lead you to what is considered a crime — to bigamy. I quite understand that, and the jury will also understand. That is why I would advise you to tell the entire truth.

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LISA.

I have told it. I have never lied in my life.
(*She bursts into tears.*) May I go now?

MAGISTRATE.

I must ask you to remain here for a while. I will not trouble you with any more questions. None at all. I must ask you simply to read your deposition and to sign it. You will see whether I have taken down your answers correctly. Will you kindly sit here? (*Pointing to the table near the window; then to the clerk.*) Show in Mr. Karenin.

(*The clerk shows in KARENIN, looking earnest and rather solemn.*)

MAGISTRATE.

Be seated, please.

KARENIN.

Thank you. (*He remains standing.*) What do you want from me?

MAGISTRATE.

My duty is to make an inquiry.

KARENIN.

In what capacity?

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MAGISTRATE.

(*smiling.*) In my capacity as investigating magistrate. You are here charged with a crime.

KARENIN.

Indeed? With what crime?

MAGISTRATE.

Bigamy. But kindly let me put you some questions. Pray be seated.

KARENIN.

No, thank you.

MAGISTRATE.

Your name?

KARENIN.

Victor Karenin.

MAGISTRATE.

Your rank?

KARENIN.

Chamberlain of the Imperial Court.

MAGISTRATE.

Your age?

KARENIN.

Thirty-eight.

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MAGISTRATE.

Your religion?

KARENIN.

Orthodox Greek. I have never before been tried on any charge. Well, what next?

MAGISTRATE.

Were you aware that Fedor Vasilievich Protassov was alive when you contracted a marriage with his wife?

KARENIN.

No; I did not know that. We were certain that he was drowned.

MAGISTRATE.

To whom did you send money every month after the false report of Protassov's death?

KARENIN.

I refuse to answer that question.

MAGISTRATE.

Very well. What was the object of your having sent twelve hundred roubles to Protassov a few days before his simulated suicide on July 17th?

KARENIN.

The money was given me to post by my wife.

MAGISTRATE.

By Madame Protassov?

KARENIN.

By my wife to send to her husband. She considered that this sum of money was his property, and having parted with him she thought it unfair to keep his money.

MAGISTRATE.

One question more: why did you stop taking steps to obtain a divorce?

KARENIN.

Because Fedor Vasilievich had undertaken to do all that was necessary, and wrote me a letter to that effect.

MAGISTRATE.

You have that letter?

KARENIN.

No; I have lost it.

MAGISTRATE.

It is very awkward that everything should be lost that could have afforded proof that you are speaking the truth.

KARENIN.

What else do you want from me?

MAGISTRATE.

All I want is to do my duty; and what you want is to prove your innocence. So I should advise you, as I have advised Madame Protassova, not to conceal things which are sure to be found out, and to say frankly what actually happened. It is more advisable, because Protassov himself is in such a condition that he relates the actual facts about everything, and will probably do so in court. I should strongly advise you —

KARENIN.

I shall be obliged if you will do your duty strictly without volunteering any kind of advice. May we go? (*He goes to LISA, who takes his arm.*)

MAGISTRATE.

I am sorry, but I must keep you here just now.

(*KARENIN turns to him with astonishment.*)

Oh no, I don't mean to arrest you, although it would greatly facilitate my inquiry. But I shall not proceed to that step. I only want to

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-question Protassov in your presence, and confront him with you, to give you an opportunity of proving the untruth of his statements. Be seated, please. (*To the clerk.*) Call in Mr. Protassov.

(*The clerk fetches in FEDIA, in rags, a total wreck.*)

FEDIA.

(*to LISA and KARENIN.*) Elizaveta Andreevna, Victor, it is not my fault it has come to this. I wanted only to do the best for you. If I am guilty, forgive me. (*He bows to the ground before them.*)

MAGISTRATE.

Will you, please, answer my questions?

FEDIA.

Ask whatever you like.

MAGISTRATE.

Your name?

FEDIA.

But you know it.

MAGISTRATE.

Answer, please.

FEDIA.

Fedor Protassov.

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MAGISTRATE.

Rank, religion, age?

FEDIA.

(after a short silence.) You ought to be ashamed to ask such silly questions. Ask something to the point, and leave all that nonsense.

MAGISTRATE.

Be careful, please, in your expressions. Answer my questions.

FEDIA.

Well, as you are not ashamed. My rank: graduate of the University of Moscow. My age: forty. My religion: orthodox Greek. What next?

MAGISTRATE.

Did Mr. Karenin and his wife know you were alive when you left your clothes on the bank and disappeared?

FEDIA.

They did not. There can be no doubt about that. I actually intended to kill myself, but then — But I need not tell you all that. The point is that they did *not* know.

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MAGISTRATE.

Your statements to the police officer contained a different story. What is the meaning of that?

FEDIA.

What police officer? Oh yes, a police officer came to the Rjanov night-shelter to see me. I was drunk, and I told all sorts of lies. I don't remember now what I said. That was all nonsense. Now I am not drunk, and I am telling you the truth. They did not know. They believed me dead. How glad I was they did! And it would have been all right for ever but for that wretch Artemiev. But if somebody must be found guilty, it is only I.

MAGISTRATE.

I understand your desire to be generous, but the law wants the truth. Why had you money sent to you?

(FEDIA *makes no answer.*)

MAGISTRATE.

You received that money through a man named Semenov, in Saratov.

(FEDIA *makes no answer.*)

MAGISTRATE.

Why do you not answer? My report will men-

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tion that the defendant did not answer these questions. This would certainly be in favour of the prosecution, and hurt both you and the other two. Don't you see that?

FEDIA.

(*silent for a moment, then passionately.*) Oh, are you not ashamed, sir? Why do you thrust yourself into other people's lives! You are engrossed by the power you possess, and you must show it off! You cause endless pain — moral pain, much worse than physical torture — to those who are a thousand times better and worthier than you.

MAGISTRATE.

I beg —

FEDIA.

Don't beg. I will tell you what I think, and you (*to the clerk*) just write it down. At least, for the first time, one of these reports will contain sense, and something manly. (*Raising his voice.*) There are three of us: she, he, and I. The relations between us have been very complicated: a moral struggle, the like of which you never dreamed of. This struggle has brought about a situation which solved the difficulties. All our troubles were over. They were happy, they loved my memory. I, in my disgrace, was happy too, because I had done

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the right thing; because I had disappeared from life — and quite right too — so as not to be in the way of those who were full of life and lived an honest life. We all lived as we ought to. Then suddenly a blackmailing blackguard comes along, and wants me to be a party to his plan of blackmail. I turn him out. He goes to you, the champion of justice, the guardian of morality. And you, just because you get some wretched monthly screw for your filthy work, you put on your uniform and swagger at your ease; showing off your power over those who tower above you, and who would not let you pass the threshold of their houses. You have climbed to a sort of pinnacle, and you are happy —

MAGISTRATE.

I shall have you turned out.

FEDIA.

Oh, I am not afraid of anything. I am a dead man — you can do nothing to me. I can't be worse off than I am, whatever you do to me. You may order me out. I don't mind.

KARENIN.

May we go?

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MAGISTRATE.

Sign your deposition first.

FEDIA.

Ha, ha, ha, ha! You pitiful beast!

MAGISTRATE.

Take him away. I shall make out an order for your arrest.

FEDIA.

(to KARENIN and LISA.) Forgive me.

KARENIN.

(*stretching out his hand to him.*) It was fated to happen so.

(LISA passes; FEDIA bows low to her.)

SCENE II

A passage in law the court. In the background is a glass door, with a GUARD standing before it. To the right is another door, through which the Prisoners are being conducted to the court.

IVAN PETROVICH, in rags, goes to the door on the right, and tries to pass through it.

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GUARD.

Stop! No admission here. How dare you!

IVAN PETROVICH.

Why no admission? The law says that the sittings of the court are public.

(Applause is heard from within.)

GUARD.

No admission, I say. I am ordered not to let anybody pass.

IVAN PETROVICH.

You rude fellow! You don't know whom you are addressing.

(A YOUNG LAWYER enters.)

YOUNG LAWYER.

Are you here on business?

IVAN PETROVICH.

No, I am one of the public. And this rude fellow, this Cerberus, won't let me go in.

YOUNG LAWYER.

This is not the entrance for the public. Wait a minute; the court will adjourn presently for lunch.

(He is about to go, but stops, seeing PRINCE ABRESKOV coming in.)

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IVAN PETROVICH.

I ought to be admitted, anyhow.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

May I inquire how far the proceedings have gone?

YOUNG LAWYER.

The speeches for the defence have just begun. Petrushin is speaking now.

(Applause is heard from the court.)

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

What attitude do the defendants adopt?

YOUNG LAWYER.

Very dignified indeed, especially that of Karenin and Elizaveta Andreevna. It is as if they were the judges and not the defendants. This is the general impression. And Petrushin is taking advantage of that.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

And Protassov?

YOUNG LAWYER.

He is extremely excited, trembles all the time.

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Quite natural, considering his life. But he is too irritable. He interrupted the counsel for the prosecution more than once, and his own counsel. He is in a frightful state of excitement.

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

What sentence do you anticipate?

YOUNG LAWYER.

It is hard to say; it is a very mixed jury. Obviously the jury won't bring it in that there has been any premeditation. But, all the same . . .

(The door opens, a gentleman comes out of the court, PRINCE ABRESKOV moves to the door.)

YOUNG LAWYER.

Would you like to go in?

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

I should, very much.

YOUNG LAWYER.

You are Prince Abreskov?

PRINCE ABRESKOV.

Yes.

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YOUNG LAWYER.

(*to the Guard.*) Let this gentleman pass. There is a free seat on the left; take it.

(*PRINCE ABRESKOV is allowed to enter; a door is opened for him, the COUNSEL for the defence is seen through it speaking.*)

IVAN PETROVICH.

Silly aristocrats! I am an intellectual aristocrat. That's something much more.

YOUNG LAWYER.

Excuse me. (*He goes off hurriedly.*)

PETUSHKOV (*entering.*)

There you are, Ivan Petrovich! How are you? How far have the proceedings gone?

IVAN PETROVICH.

The speeches for the defence have begun. Don't try to pass. They will not let you.

GUARD.

Silence. You are not in a public-house here.

(*Further applause is heard.*
The door opens, and there is a

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*rush of LAWYERS, GENTLEMEN,
and LADIES into the passage.)*

FIRST LADY.

Wonderful! He moved me to tears.

OFFICER.

It is more thrilling than any novel. But I cannot understand how she could have loved him. Such a horrible face!

*(The other door opens and the
DEFENDANTS appear; LISA and
KARENIN go through the passage.
FEDIA follows them.)*

FIRST LADY.

Don't talk. Here he comes. Look how agitated he is.

(The LADY and OFFICER pass off.)

FEDIA.

(Coming near to Ivan Petrovich.) You have brought it?

IVAN PETROVICH.

Here it is. *(He hands him a case.)*

FEDIA.

(hides it in his pocket and moves to go; then sees

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PETUSHKOV.) How stupid it all is. How wearisome! How meaningless! (*He turns to go.*)

PETRUSHIN.

(*his counsel; a stout man, with red cheeks, very animated.*) Well, my friend, our case is looking up. But don't spoil things in your last speech.

FEDIA.

I shall not speak at all. I don't want to.

PETRUSHIN.

No? — you must. But don't be uneasy. Now we are pretty sure to win. You just tell them what you told me — that if you are being tried it is for not having committed suicide, which would have meant committing a crime indeed, against both civil and ecclesiastic laws.

FEDIA.

I shall not tell them anything.

PETRUSHIN.

Why not?

FEDIA.

I don't want to. Tell me only — at the worst, what can happen?

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PETRUSHIN.

I told you. At the worst, it might be deportation to Siberia.

FEDIA.

Who would be deported?

PETRUSHIN.

You and your wife.

FEDIA.

And at the best?

PETRUSHIN.

Penance in a monastery, and, of course, the annulment of the second marriage.

FEDIA.

In fact, I shall be tied to her again. I mean she tied to me?

PETRUSHIN.

Well, that cannot be helped. But don't be so agitated. And please say what I told you to say. I beseech you not to say what is unnecessary. You want — (*noticing that they are surrounded by listeners.*) I am tired. I will go and rest. You ought to rest also in the meanwhile. And mind, don't let yourself be alarmed.

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FEDIA.

No other sentence could possibly be expected?

PETRUSHIN.

(*going.*) No other.

(*OFFICERS of the Court enter, pass, and stand in the passage.*)

FEDIA.

Now then. (*He takes the revolver out of his pocket and shoots himself through the heart. He falls. All the people in the passage rush to him.*)
I think I have not missed this time. Call Lisa.

(*People are crowding in from all the doors: Judges, witnesses, public. LISA rushes to Fedia. MASHA, KARENIN, IVAN PETROVICH, PRINCE ABRESKOV follow her.*)

LISA.

What have you done, Fedia! Why?

FEDIA.

Forgive me, I could not make you free before.
. . . Now, it is not for you, it is for my own

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sake. . . . I am much better so. I was
ready even . . .

LISA.

You will live.

*(A doctor bends down over him,
lays his ear to his heart.)*

FEDIA.

Oh, I know it is over. Good-bye, Victor.
And, Masha, you are late this time. Oh, how
happy I am now! *(Dies.)*

THE CAUSE OF IT ALL

CHARACTERS

OLD AKULINA. Seventy years old; still brisk, dignified, old fashioned.

MICHAEL. Her son; thirty-five, passionate, proud, vain, strong.

MARTHA. His wife, thirty-two. A grumbler; talks a great deal and rapidly.

PARASKA. Ten years old. Daughter of Michael and Martha.

WATCHMAN TARAS. Fifty. Self-important, gives himself airs, speaks slowly.

TRAMP. Forty; wiry, thin, speaks stiltedly. When drunk is very free.

IGNAT. A chatterbox, gay, stupid.

NEIGHBOUR. Forty. Fussy.

AUTUMN. A hut with a closet.

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ACT I

Old AKULINA is spinning; the housewife MARTHA is making dough; little PARASKA is rocking the cradle.

MARTHA.

Oh, my heart has a boding of ill. What can he be about? It will be as bad as last time when he went to sell the wood. He spent nearly half on drink. And it's always my fault.

AKULINA.

Why reckon on evil? It is still early. It is a long way off. It takes time.

MARTHA.

Akimich has returned. It's not early. He left after my man, but my man is not back. Worry, worry, that's all the pleasure one gets.

AKULINA.

Akimich had sold his wood; he only had to deliver it. Our man was taking his to the market.

MARTHA.

I should not be afraid if he was alone, but he went with Ignat. And every time he goes out with that thick-headed mule — heaven help me! it never ends well, he always gets drunk. Day after day I struggle on. Everything depends on me. If anything good ever came along! But nothing pleasant ever happens, and it's work, work from morning till night.

The door opens, and the local watchman TARAS enters with a ragged tramp.

TARAS.

How do you do? I have brought you a lodger.

TRAMP.

(*Bowing.*) Greetings to the hosts.

MARTHA.

Why do you bring them to us so often? We had a man here Wednesday night. You always bring them to us. You ought to take them to Stepanida: she has no children. I don't know where to turn with mine, and you always bring tramps to us.

TARAS.

I take them to every one in turn.

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MARTHA.

In turn, indeed! I have children. And my man is out.

TARAS.

If he sleeps here he won't wear out the place he lies on.

AKULINA.

(*To the TRAMP.*) Come in, sit down. Make yourself at home.

TRAMP.

Thanks. I should like something to eat, if possible.

MARTHA.

Hasn't had time to look round, and asks for food at once. Didn't you come through the village?

TRAMP.

(*Sighs.*) I'm not accustomed to this sort of thing in my position. But as I have nothing of my own —

AKULINA *rises, gets the bread, cuts a slice and gives it to the tramp.*

TRAMP.

(*Taking the bread.*) *Merci.* (*He sits down on the bench and eats greedily.*)

TARAS.

Where is Michael?

MARTHA.

Gone to town with the hay. It's time he was back, but he's not. I can't help thinking something has happened.

TARAS.

What could happen?

MARTHA.

What, indeed? Nothing good, of course; but you can count on something bad.

AKULINA.

(Sitting down to her spinning wheel. To TARAS, pointing at MARTHA.) She never can hold her tongue. I know, we women are not wise. But once he's out of the house, he doesn't care a rap. I expect him to come home drunk.

MARTHA.

If he was alone I wouldn't be afraid, but he went with Ignat.

TARAS.

(Smiling.) Oh, well, Ignat Ivanovich is a rare one for drink.

AKULINA.

What has Ignat got to do with him?

MARTHA.

It's all very well for you to talk, mother. But I'm just sick to death of his drunkenness. When he's sober, it would be a sin to complain, but when he's drunk you know what he's like. Don't say a word. Everything's wrong.

TARAS.

But what about you women? A man gets drunk. Well, what of that? He shows off a bit. Sleep it off, and all will be smooth again. But you women must pester.

MARTHA.

It doesn't matter what you do. If he's drunk, everything's wrong.

TARAS.

You must understand that a man can't help drinking sometimes. Your woman's work keeps you at home; but we can't help it, if we've got business or are in company. What if one does drink? There's no harm in it.

MARTHA.

It's all very well for you to talk, but it's hard on us women; oh! so hard. If you men were in our place for a week you'd alter your tune, I know. Make and bake, and boil and spin, and weave, and the cattle, and all the work, and these little naked things to be washed and dressed and fed. It all falls on us, and directly the least thing isn't exactly as he likes — there it is, especially when he's drunk. Oh, what a life is woman's!

TRAMP.

(*Munching.*) Quite true. Drink is the cause of it all, and all the catastrophes of life come from it.

TARAS.

It's evident that it's knocked you over.

TRAMP.

No, not exactly, though I have suffered from it too. Were it not for that, the course of my life might have been different.

TARAS.

Well, to my mind, if you drink wisely no harm comes of it.

TRAMP.

And I say it has such power that it may ruin a man.

MARTHA.

That's what I say. You work, you do your best, and all your reward is to be scolded or beaten like a dog.

TRAMP.

Not only that, but there are people who are slaves to it — who lose their heads through it, and perform actions that are quite undesirable. So long as he does not drink, give him anything you like, he will take nothing that does not belong to him. Once he's drunk, he grabs anything that comes to hand. He gets blows, he is put in prison. When he's not drunk he is honest, worthy; but directly he drinks, he becomes slavish — he takes anything he can.

AKULINA.

I think it depends on oneself.

TRAMP.

It depends on oneself when one is healthy, but drink is a disease.

TARAS.

A disease, indeed! You give him what he de-

serves, and that disease will very soon disappear. Good-bye, so long. (*He leaves.*)

MARTHA, *wiping her hands, is about to go out.*

AKULINA.

(*Looking at the tramp and seeing that he has eaten the bread.*) Martha, Martha, cut him some more.

MARTHA.

What next! I'm going to see to the samovar.

AKULINA *rises, goes to the table, takes the bread and cuts a slice and gives it to the tramp.*

TRAMP.

Merci. I have developed a great appetite.

AKULINA.

Are you a factory hand?

TRAMP.

Who? I? I was an engine-driver.

AKULINA.

Did you earn much?

TRAMP.

From 50 to 70 roubles a month.

AKULINA.

Dear me! How on earth did you come down in the world so?

TRAMP.

I'm not the only one who's come down in the world. I came down because we live in such times that an honest man can't make his way.

MARTHA.

(*Entering with samovar.*) O Lord, he's not back yet. He'll certainly be drunk. My heart tells me so.

AKULINA.

I'm beginning to think he's gone on the spree.

MARTHA.

There, you see! I have to struggle on alone, make and bake, boil and spin, and weave, and the cattle, it all falls on me, and these little naked things. (*She points to the children. The baby in the cradle screams.*) Parasha, rock the cradle. Oh, what a life is woman's! And if he's drunk it is all wrong. Say a word he doesn't like —

AKULINA.

(*Making the tea.*) Here's the last of the tea. Did you tell him to bring some?

MARTHA.

Of course. He meant to. But will he? Will he give a thought to his home? (*She puts the samovar on the table.*)

The TRAMP leaves the table.

AKULINA.

Why do you get up? We are going to have tea.

TRAMP.

I give you thanks for your kind hospitality. (*He throws down his cigarette and approaches the table.*)

MARTHA.

What are you? Are you a peasant or what?

TRAMP.

I'm neither a peasant nor a noble, missus; I belong to a double-edged class.

MARTHA.

What do you mean! (*Gives him a cup.*)

TRAMP.

Merci. I mean that my father was a Polish count; and besides him there were many more, and I had two mothers also.

AKULINA.

O Lord! How could you?

TRAMP.

It was this way, because my mother lived in prostitution — in polygamy, therefore — and there were all sorts of fathers, and there were two mothers, because the mother who bore me deserted me in my tender years. A yard-porter's wife took pity on me and brought me up. In general, my biography is complicated.

MARTHA.

Have some more tea. Were you apprenticed?

TRAMP.

My apprenticeship was unsatisfactory. I was given to a smith, not by my real mother but my adopted mother. That blacksmith was my first teacher. And his teaching consisted in beating me so, that he hit his anvil seldomer than my unhappy head. But no matter how much he beat me, he could not deprive me of talent. Then I went to a locksmith; there I was appreciated, and made my way. I became the chief craftsman; I made the acquaintance of educated men. I belonged to a party; I was able to acquire literary

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speech. My life might have been raised, for I had enormous talent.

AKULINA.

Of course.

TRAMP.

And then there was a disturbance — the tyrannous burden of the people's life — and I got into prison, and was deprived of liberty of my life.

MARTHA.

What for?

TRAMP.

For rights.

MARTHA.

What rights?

TRAMP.

What rights! The rights that the well-to-do should not be everlastingly idle, and that the working proletariat should be rewarded for his toil.

AKULINA.

You're talking about the land.

TRAMP.

Of course. It is the same in the agrarian question.

AKULINA.

May the Lord and the Queen of Heaven grant it. We are sorely pushed for land.

TRAMP.

So my barque was carried along on the waves of life's ocean.

AKULINA.

What are you going to do now?

TRAMP.

Now? Now I'm going to Moscow. I shall go to some contractor. There's no help for it. I shall humble myself. I shall say, Give me any work you like, only take me on.

AKULINA.

Have some more tea.

TRAMP.

Thank you; I mean *merci*.

AKULINA.

There's Michael. Just in time for tea.

MARTHA.

(*Rises.*) Oh, woe betide us. He's with Ignat. So he's drunk.

MICHAEL *and* IGNAT *stumble into the room; both are drunk.*

IGNAT.

How do you do? (*He prays before the ikon.*) Here we are, you dirty skunk,* just in time for the samovar. We go to church—mass is just over; we go to dinner, just eaten up, but we go to the pub and we're in the nick of time. Ha-ha-ha. You offer us tea, we offer you vodka. That's all right, isn't it? (*He laughs.*)

MICHAEL.

Where did this swell come from? (*He takes a bottle from his coat pocket and puts it on the table.*) Where are the cups?

AKULINA.

Did you have a good trip?

IGNAT.

It couldn't have been better, you dirty skunk. We drank, we had a good time, and here we are.

MICHAEL.

(*Fills the cup, and hands one to his mother and then one to the tramp.*) Have a drink, too.

* Literally, "dirty stick"—a very offensive expression in Russia.—Editor.

TRAMP.

(*Takes cup.*) I give you heartfelt thanks.
To your health. (*Empties cup.*)

IGNAT.

You're a brick, you dirty skunk, to gulp it down like that. I expect it's gone all down your muscles after your fast. (*He pours out more vodka.*)

TRAMP.

(*Drinking.*) I wish success to all you undertake.

AKULINA.

Did you get a good price?

IGNAT.

Whatever the price was, it's all gone on drink, you dirty skunk. Hasn't it, Michael?

MICHAEL.

Of course. What's the good of looking at money? It's not often you get the chance of a spree.

MARTHA.

What are you showing off for? It's not nice. There's no food in the house, and you go on like this.

MICHAEL.

(*Threateningly.*) Martha!

MARTHA.

What's the good of saying Martha? I know I'm Martha. The very sight of you makes me sick, you shameless drunkard!

MICHAEL.

Martha, you take care.

MARTHA.

Take care, indeed. I shan't take care.

MICHAEL.

Pour out the vodka, and offer it to the guests.

MARTHA.

Oh, you blear-eyed dog! I don't want to speak to you.

MICHAEL.

You don't! You dog's hide! What did you say?

MARTHA.

(*Rocking the cradle.*) What did I say? I said I didn't want to speak to you, so there!

MICHAEL.

Ah, you've forgotten? (*Springs from the table and gives her a blow on the head that displaces her shawl.*)

MARTHA.

(*Running to the door.*) Oh-h-h-h!

MICHAEL.

You shan't go away, you beast! (*Rushes towards her.*)

TRAMP.

(*Jumps from the table and seizes MICHAEL'S hand.*) You have no right whatever to do that.

MICHAEL.

(*Pausing and looking at the tramp with amazement.*) Is it long since you had a thrashing?

TRAMP.

You have no right whatever to insult the female sex.

MICHAEL.

Oh, you hound. Do you see that? (*He shows him his fist.*)

TRAMP.

You are not allowed to exploit the female sex.

MICHAEL.

I'll give you such a sound licking that you won't know your head from your heels.

TRAMP.

Well, beat me. Why don't you? Beat me.
(*He offers him his face.*)

MICHAEL.

(*Shrugs his shoulders and lifts his hands.*)
Well, if I do —

TRAMP.

You may sin seven times; you can only pay the penalty once. Beat me.

MICHAEL.

You are a queer man, I must say. (*He drops his arms and shakes his head.*)

IGNAT.

It's easy to see you're pretty gone on women, you dirty skunk.

TRAMP.

I stand up for rights.

MICHAEL.

(*To MARTHA, going to the table and breathing heavily.*) Well, Martha, you'd better light

a big candle, and say a good prayer for him.* If it hadn't been for him I'd have beaten you to pulp.

MARTHA.

What else do I expect from you? Struggle all your life, bake and boil, and directly—

MICHAEL.

That'll do, that'll do. (*He offers the tramp some vodka.*) Drink. (*To his wife.*) What are you making such a fuss about? Can't understand a joke. Here, take the money, and put it away. Here are six roubles and forty kopeks.

AKULINA.

What about the tea and sugar she asked for?

MICHAEL *gets a packet out of his pocket and gives it to his wife.*

MARTHA *takes the money and the parcel and goes into the closet, silently arranging the shawl on her head.*

MICHAEL.

These women folk are such fools. (*He offers more vodka.*)

* It is a custom in Russia to light candles before ikons in the churches, and to light one on behalf of the person you wish to thank is a common way of expressing gratitude.—*Editor.*

TRAMP.

(*Refusing.*) Drink it yourself.

MICHAEL.

Don't stand on ceremony.

TRAMP.

(*Drinks.*) All success to you.

IGNAT.

(*To the TRAMP.*) I expect you've seen many sights. Oh, you've got a fine coat on, a real good coat. Wherever did you get it? (*He touches the ragged coat.*) Don't you mend it; it's fine just as it is. Years are telling on it, but you can't help that. If I had a coat like that the women would love me too. (*To MARTHA.*) Wouldn't they?

AKULINA.

You ought not to make fun of a man that you know nothing about, Ignat.

TRAMP.

It is want of education.

IGNAT.

I mean it kindly. Drink. (*Offers cup.*)
TRAMP *drinks.*

AKULINA.

You said yourself that it was the cause of all things, and that you'd been to prison through it.

MICHAEL.

What did you do time for?

TRAMP.

(*Very drunk.*) I suffered because I made an appropriation.

MICHAEL.

How?

TRAMP.

It was like this. We came to him, the fat-bellied creature, and we said, "Money — if not, see here's a revolver." He tried every way, this way and that, but he gave us 2,300 roubles.

AKULINA.

O Lord!

TRAMP.

We were just going to distribute this sum fairly; Zembrikov was our leader. But the crows were down on us. We were arrested — sent to prison.

IGNAT.

And did they take the money.

TRAMP.

Of course. But they could not bring it home to me. The prosecuting counsel said to me, "You have stolen money." I answered at once, "Robbers steal; but we have simply appropriated for the party." He couldn't say anything to that. He tried one thing and another, but he could not answer. "Take him away to prison," he said, thus cutting short my liberty of my life.

IGNAT.

(*To MICHAEL.*) He's clever, the hound. A brick. (*He offers more vodka.*) Drink, you dirty skunk.

AKULINA.

What language you do use.

IGNAT.

I'm not swearing, grannie. That's only a little phrase of mine — dirty skunk, dirty skunk. To your health, grannie.

MARTHA comes in, goes to the table and pours out tea.

MICHAEL.

That's all right. What's the good of being offended? I say thank you to him. I respect

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you, Martha, ever so much. (*To the TRAMP.*) Don't you make a mistake. (*He puts his arm round MARTHA.*) I respect my old woman — that's how I respect my old woman. My old woman; she's A1. I wouldn't change her for anybody.

IGNAT.

That's right. Grannie Akulina, have a drink. I stand it.

TRAMP.

Such is the power of alcoholic stimulation. Every one was in a state of melancholy. Now all is pleasant. Friendly feeling reigns, grannie. I feel full of love to you and to all mankind. Dear brothers. (*He sings a revolutionary song.*)

MICHAEL.

It affects him very much. He's been starved.

ACT II

The same hut. Morning.
AKULINA and MARTHA. MICHAEL is still sleeping.

MARTHA.

(*Picking up the axe.*) I'm going to chop some wood.

AKULINA.

(*With a pail.*) He'd have knocked you about badly yesterday if it hadn't been for that other one. I don't see him. Has he gone? I expect he has.

They both go out.

MICHAEL.

(*Getting down from the stove.*) Oh, oh, the sun is up. (*He gets up and puts on his boots.*) I suppose the women have gone to fetch water. Oh, my head does ache. But I don't care. It can go to the devil. (*Says his prayers; washes.*) I'll go and harness the horse.

MARTHA *enters with wood.*

MARTHA.

Where's yesterday's beggar? Is he gone?

MICHAEL.

I suppose so. I don't see him.

MARTHA.

It doesn't matter. But he is clearly a clever man. He said he earned fifty roubles a month. He is a good man also.

MICHAEL.

You think he is good because he took your part.

MARTHA.

What of that?

MICHAEL *dresses.*

MARTHA.

Did you put away the tea and sugar you brought home last night?

MICHAEL.

I thought you took them.

AKULINA *enters with the pail.*

MARTHA.

(*To the old woman.*) Mother, did you take the parcel?

AKULINA.

I don't know anything about it.

MICHAEL.

I put it down on the window sill last night.

AKULINA.

I saw it there.

MARTHA.

Where can it be? (*Searches.*)

AKULINA.

It's a bad job.

A NEIGHBOUR enters.

NEIGHBOUR.

Well, Michael, are you ready to go for the wood?

MICHAEL.

Of course. I'll harness directly. But, you see, we've lost something.

NEIGHBOUR.

Have you? What is it?

MARTHA.

The master brought back a parcel of tea and sugar from town last night. He put it here on the window. I hadn't the sense to put it away, and now it's gone.

MICHAEL.

We suspect the tramp who slept here.

NEIGHBOUR.

What tramp?

MARTHA.

He was a thin man, without a beard.

MICHAEL.

With a ragged coat.

NEIGHBOUR.

And curly hair and a hooked nose?

MICHAEL.

Yes, yes.

NEIGHBOUR.

I just met him. I wondered to see him walk so fast.

MICHAEL.

It's sure to be him. Was he far off when you met him?

NEIGHBOUR.

I don't expect he's crossed the bridge yet.

MICHAEL.

(*Seizes his cap; he and the NEIGHBOUR run out.*) We must catch him, the rogue. He took it.

MARTHA.

Oh, what a sin. It's sure to be him.

AKULINA.

And what if it is not? Once, about twenty years ago, a man was accused of having stolen a

horse. The villagers gathered together; one said, "I saw him put a halter on him." Another said, "I saw him leading it off." The horse was a big, long, dappled one, easy to see. Everybody began to search for it. In the wood they met the young man. "You took it." He swore on his oath he hadn't. "You took it. What's the good of looking at him?" said one; "the women said they had seen him and they are right." He answered roughly. And George Lapushkin, a hot-tempered man he was — he's dead now — just lifted his fist and gave him a blow in the face. "It was you," he said. After that blow, every one fell on him; they struck him with sticks and with their fists, and they beat him to death. And then what do you think happened? The next day they found the real thief. The other young man had only gone to the wood to pick out a tree to fell.

MARTHA.

Of course, it's easy enough to make a mistake. Although he's not in a good position, it's clear he's a good man.

AKULINA.

He's fallen very low. What can you expect from such a man?

MARTHA.

Listen to them shouting! They are bringing him back, I expect.

MICHAEL *enters, also the NEIGHBOUR, an old man, and a boy. They push in the TRAMP between them.*

MICHAEL.

(*Holding the tea and sugar to his wife, excitedly.*) I found it in his trouser pocket. The thief, the rogue!

AKULINA.

(*To MARTHA.*) Yes, it's him, poor fellow. See how he hangs his head.

MARTHA.

He was evidently talking about himself yesterday, when he said that a man will take anything when he's drunk.

TRAMP.

I'm not a thief. I'm an appropriator. I am a worker, and I must live. You can't understand. You may do your worst.

NEIGHBOUR.

Shall we take him to the village elder, or straight to the police?

TRAMP.

Do what you like, I say. I am afraid of nothing, and can suffer for my convictions. If you were well educated you would understand.

MARTHA.

(*To her husband.*) Let him go in peace. We've got the parcel back. Let him go; don't let us sin.

MICHAEL.

(*Repeating his wife's words.*) Don't let us sin. You want to teach me! I don't know what to do without you?

MARTHA.

I only said you might let him off.

MICHAEL.

Let him off. Don't I know what to do unless you teach me, you fool? Let him off! He may go, but I have a word to say to him to make him feel what he's done. So you listen, *mossieu*, to what I have to say. You may be in a nasty fix, but what you've done is disgusting, very disgusting. Another man would break your ribs for it, and then take you to the police; but I say, You've done a nasty thing; it could not be worse. But you are in such a bad way that I don't want to

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harm you. Go, go, in God's name, and don't do such a thing again. (*Turning to his wife.*) And you wanted to teach me.

NEIGHBOUR.

You're wrong, Michael; you're wrong to encourage them.

MICHAEL.

(*Still holding the parcel.*) If I'm wrong, I'm wrong. It's my business. (*To his wife.*) You want to teach me. (*He pauses, looks at the parcel, and with a decisive movement gives it to the TRAMP, looking at his wife.*) Take this, and drink tea on your way. (*To the wife.*) You want to teach me. Go along, go along; it's no good talking about it.

TRAMP.

(*Takes the parcel.—A pause.*) You think I don't understand? (*His voice trembles.*) I quite understand. Had you beaten me like a dog it would have been easier. Do you think I don't know what I am? I am a rogue: I mean a degenerate. Forgive me, for Christ's sake. (*Sobs, throws the parcel on the table, and leaves the hut hurriedly.*)

MARTHA.

I'm glad he didn't take the tea, or we couldn't have made any.

MICHAEL.

(To his wife.) You wanted to teach me.

NEIGHBOUR.

Poor fellow! he burst into tears.

AKULINA.

He is a man, too.

